BRUNEL UNIVERSITY

In the Name of the Father: Manliness, Control and Social Salvation in the Works of George MacDonald

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Acknowledgements

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'I may love him, I may love him, for he is a man, and I am only a Beech Tree.'

George MacDonald, *Phantastes*

'Malcolm had early learned that a man's will must, like a true monarch, rule down every rebellious movement of its subjects.'

George MacDonald, *Malcolm*

'And as they grew misshapen in body they had grown in knowledge and cleverness, and now were able to do things no mortal could see the possibility of. But as they grew in cunning, they grew in mischief, and their great delight was in every way they could think of to annoy the people who lived in the open-air storey above them.'

George MacDonald, *The Princess and the Goblin*

Abstract

This thesis considers the representation of manly identity in the works of George MacDonald, and the way in which that identity is formed in relation to shifting power networks and contemporary social discourses. I argue that the environment of technological and societal change experienced in the mid-Victorian era (in the wake of industrialisation, urbanisation, changes in suffrage and war) led to a cultural need to re-align social, political, physical and economic power within a framework of male moral strength. Taking his lead from Thomas Carlyle and German transcendentalism, MacDonald promoted a paternalist 'ideal' of manliness that articulated a synthesis of moral and physical power, yet which also served to promote a paradigm of domestic authority within diverse areas of male interaction. The dual purposes of this ideal were the defence of national identity (the purview of what I term the 'Soldier body'), and the enforcement of a paternalist authority hierarchy that is swiftly subsumed within a hierarchy of social status. As a result, we see the growth of close inter-relationships between the representation of manly identity and the language of class, heavily influenced by Christian socialist narratives of individual development through social education and quiescence. Moreover, we begin to witness disturbing scenes of violence and control, as aspects of MacDonald's culture defy confinement within his model of patriarchal domestic authority.

Introduction

In the Name of the Father

What is a father? Whether we approach the question psychoanalytically, historically or socially, the answer remains elusive. Indeed, as John Tosh and Eve Sedgwick demonstrate, the concept of fatherhood is closely tied to the social context, and is therefore dynamic – adjusting according to new social realities, new discourses, new ideologies (Tosh, 2005; Tosh, 1995; Sedgwick, 1993).[1] In this thesis, I approach the question of fatherhood as a source of masculine social power in the works of George MacDonald. The theoretical basis relies on the Foucauldian concept of identity as structured by the tripartite axis of truth, power and ethics (Cocks, 2006: 1212; Simons, 1995: 2), considering in particular the construction of manliness through the inter-relationship of discourse and history within MacDonald's social circle. Through analysis of the implicit power-dynamic contained within such discourses, I investigate the way in which MacDonald's narratives document a changing concept of manliness and paternal authority in the years from the Crimean War to the *fin de siècle*.[2] To this end, the Foucault-inspired work of Mary Poovey, Eve Sedgwick and John Tosh helps to provide a social constructivist feminist framework within the bounds of new historicism. Aided by detailed textual analysis across all genres of his work, I shall argue that George MacDonald upheld models of authoritative manliness that supported the construction of an idealised domesticity – a domesticity that MacDonald and his affiliates amongst the Christian Socialists envisioned as the template for a unified society, and as a means to resolving all forms of social conflict.[3]

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[1] I refer to 'discourse' in the Foucauldian sense of the term, focusing primarily on the ways in which dialogues are constructed relative to 'decentred networks of mobile forces' that drive towards particular representations of identity (Torfing, 2011: 195).

[2] I use the term 'manliness' as distinct from 'masculinity'. John Tosh reminds us that 'manliness' (as opposed to 'masculinity') was, in the nineteenth century, a concept predicated on social position and authority rather than an individual choice or lifestyle (Tosh, 2005: 2).

[3] Rather than defining the Christian Socialists rigidly (as members of the 1848-1854 movement founded by F.D. Maurice, A.J. Scott, Thomas Erskine and John Ludlow), I shall define them according to the large and diverse group of individuals that formed their social circle. Nor do I seek to emphasise the *Christian* in 'Christian Socialists'; the Working Men's College and the Women's College attracted many individuals (such as William Gaskell and John Ruskin, Josephine Butler and Barbara Bodichon (née Leigh Smith)) who shared their world-vision if not their political or spiritual ideals.

MacDonald lived in a politically turbulent era, one already beginning to embrace new tolerances as regards class, gender, sexual and racial boundaries. As MacDonald's narratives fail to evolve in keeping with these changes, aspects of his culture resist his vision of social harmony, and must be brought under control. This in turn creates an intriguing tension between MacDonald's ideological message, and the social elements that resist assimilation into an incompatible social identity. While Roderick McGillis claims that MacDonald subverts gender identities in his 'queer' reading of *At the Back of the North Wind* (McGillis, 2003: 98), I argue that MacDonald himself contributes to the construction of a rigid gender identity, and that even when he appears to subvert it – to 'queer' it – the subversion itself draws us back to conformity. Donald Hall and Eve Sedgwick remind us that 'Queer' is 'a continuing moment, movement, motive – recurrent, eddying, *troublant*' (Hall, 2003: 12), yet rather than embracing the inevitable conflicts of identity native to his era, we see MacDonald repeatedly *unifying* divergent identities, bringing them under the banner of a single gender-defined *ideal*.[4] In this way, the harsh realities of working-class life are smoothed into parochial harmony, while the non-conforming elements are pushed to the margins of the narrative.[5] Female contemporary education and property ownership (being described damaging towards women) become narrative devices to ensure the transmission of authority to an appropriate patriarchal figure.[6] Sexual violence and marital discord are resolved peacefully, with the blame laid at disobedience and non-conformity rather than an imbalanced social structure.[7] Working women are forced into domestic labour, while the prostitute (who comes to represent all sexualised women) becomes a threefold object of scrutiny – one of pity, disgust and forbidden desire.[8]

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[4]Within this thesis, the term 'Ideal' stands in reference to the work of the German Idealists – i.e. a concept that is perceived to have at its root an element of the transcendental / universal. Like many of the Christian Socialists, MacDonald was heavily influenced by the German Idealists and the German, Scottish and English Romantics.

[5] See, for example, the treatment of the rebelling factory workers in 'The Broken Swords' and 'A Dream within a Dream' (page 21), or Clare Skymer's reaction to the chained menagerie animals in *A Rough Shaking* (page 159).

[6] See, for example, the transmission of male authority through female spiritual education in *Adela Cathcart* (page 77), or the damage caused by female property ownership in *The Marquis of Lossie* and *Donal Grant*, each instance of which is resolved by the eventual transmission of property into the hands of the 'manly' heroes Malcolm MacPhail (page 84) and Donal Grant (page 201).

[7] See, for example, the threatened whipping of Juliet Faber in *Paul Faber, Surgeon*, the scenes of domestic violence between the cabman and his wife in *At the Back of the North Wind* or between Eliza and her husband in *The Vicar's Daughter* (page 232).

[8] See MacDonald's treatment of female sexuality and prostitution in Chapter 7: Urban Environments, Sexuality and Domestic Control (page 207). Examples include the Alder Maiden in *Phantastes*, Lilith in *Lilith* and the unnamed prostitutes in *Alec Forbes of Howglen*, *David Elginbrod* and *Sir Gibbie*.

While Ginger Stelle and Kathy Triggs describe MacDonald as 'something of a rebel against the establishment camp' (Stelle, 2005: 51; Triggs, 1986: v), I shall demonstrate that the role of the father in MacDonald's narratives is instead one of constraint and social control, ensuring conformity to his idealised domestic paradigm, or else exiling the disruptive parties from the narrative space. Sedgwick notes that such an 'imposition of the imaginary patriarchal Family […] rationalizes, reforms, and perpetuates, in the face of every kind of change, the unswerving exploitations of sex and of class' (Sedgwick, 1993: 117), and this becomes apparent in MacDonald's narratives as his views of domestic salvation grow increasingly out of touch with the realities of his culture. It is in the name of the father – the paternalist head of the domestic, social and spiritual hierarchies – that non-conformists are neutralised, whether they are imprisoned, mutilated, exiled or killed. At the close of MacDonald's narratives, the father remains triumphant, and a vision of social harmony remains – but it is a vision offered only to those who are able to exist under the auspices of paternalism, within the restrictive boundaries of domesticity. Investigating these uncomfortable scenes within MacDonald's narratives helps us to view clearly the widening gap between his rhetoric of unification, and a society increasingly fragmented along the boundaries of class and gender identity. This in turn helps us to situate MacDonald within his historical context, and to consider him, not as a purveyor of myths and universal truths (as he has traditionally been perceived), but rather as a quintessentially Victorian writer influenced by and commenting upon the discourses and events of his era.[9]

George MacDonald – Origins and Inspirations

During MacDonald's lifetime, he witnessed (and experienced) fundamental changes to his social environment, both within his native Scotland and his adopted home in England – changes which helped to reshape cultural definitions of manliness, morality and social identity. Prior to MacDonald's birth in 1824, the question of Scottish identity in particular underwent dramatic revision following the passing of (and successive attempts to repeal) the 1707 Acts of Union, which merged the two kingdoms of Scotland and England to form Great Britain. Maureen Martin argues that the Acts fostered a need within Scottish communities to construct (and defend) a new national identity that represented Scotland as 'Britain's

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[9] For background on the mythopoeic tradition of MacDonald research, see page xxxiv.

masculine heartland' (Martin, 2009: 2). Heather Streets (2004) concurs, and further argues that the masculine identification of Scotland was rooted in its martial history, first as a military opponent to England and later as an ally within imperial conflicts. As such, she claims, the 'ideologies of gender in the military environment also helped to shape Victorian ideals of masculinity more generally' (Streets, 2004: 10). However, it is equally important to consider the dramatic changes in economy and social structure that transformed Scotland from the rural ideal depicted in Walter Scott's *Waverley* into the densely-urbanised environment represented by, for example, Aberdeen in MacDonald's 1865 *Alec Forbes of Howglen*.[10]

Richard Sher (2005) describes the agricultural revolution as the primary agent of economic change in Scotland, triggering a consolidation of land into the hands of a few wealthy landowners capable of effecting the agricultural reforms necessary to make Scottish farming a competitive industry. He sees this as the main force behind the collapse of clan rule and Highland culture, since 'the adoption of commercial practices by the Highland chiefs' eroded the 'traditional concept of heritage as a paternalistic trusteeship', replacing it 'with an impersonal legalist concept of heritage as ownership without social obligation' (Sher, 2005: 164). The consequence was the first phase of the Clearances in the mid-eighteenth century, which saw vulnerable families within rural locations – the unskilled labourers, the crofters, the small-scale farmers most affected by changing technologies – forced to emigrate, whether to Lowland cities or abroad, under threat of poverty, starvation or eviction. As the value of land for agricultural or grazing purposes outweighed the value of human capital, Lowland cities such as Aberdeen, Glasgow and Edinburgh swelled faster than almost any other place in Europe (Sher, 2005: 165). Indeed, I.G.C. Hutchinson notes that over the course of the nineteenth century the proportion of the Scottish population living in the industrial midlands of Scotland increased from 38.9% to 65.6% (Hutchinson, 2005: 176), a situation exacerbated by high levels of immigration from Ireland, by the devastating potato famines of Scotland and Ireland in the 1840s, by soaring food prices (maintained by the controversial Corn Laws), and by the implementation of a Poor Law that refused assistance to the physically able (Hutchinson, 2005: 181; 183). Through the 1860s and 1870s tensions between landlords and tenants escalated again, when excessive application of game rights by landowners triggered a political revolt by farmers (Hutchinson, 2005: 181), nor did the threats of rural eviction abate

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[10] See Chapter 4: Men in the City – Victims and Reformers (page 107).

until security of tenure was ensured by the passing of the Crofters' Holdings Act in 1886 (Hutchinson, 2005: 184).

Hutchinson complains that while discussion of Scottish political themes is evident in the satirical poetry of Robert Burns and James Hogg, or in the Romances of Walter Scott, it is curiously absent in Victorian literature (Hutchinson, 2005: 196). Nevertheless, these themes are clearly in evidence within MacDonald's novels. Although it is true that most of his writings lack the asserted social commentary of Charles Dickens, George Eliot, Elizabeth Gaskell and Thomas Hardy, MacDonald's novels nevertheless chronicle the changing economic environment of both Scotland and England through the theme of paternalism, given sharper emphasis by his Scottish ancestry and the opposition of Capitalism and paternalism seen in Clearance narratives such as *The Marquis of Lossie* (1877) and *What's Mine's Mine* (1886). It is likewise through the re-instatement of Fatherhood, and the domestic ideology it represents, that MacDonald's narratives articulate (albeit limited) unification, drawing a disruptive Capitalistic environment back to into the idealised harmony of paternal rule.

George MacDonald was born in Huntley, Aberdeenshire on 10th December 1824, the second of six children born to George MacDonald Senior and Helen MacKay.[11] Following his mother's death from tuberculosis in 1832, George MacDonald and his brothers were raised by their father under the watchful eye of his formidable Calvinist grandmother, Isabella Robertson. Despite Raeper's acknowledgement that the MacDonald family were financially 'a cut above the other people of the town' (Raeper, 1988: 28), the family were never wealthy; originally the co-owner of a thread factory and bleach-works, MacDonald's father incurred devastating debts when his brother Charles, a banker, absconded to America under accusations of financial mismanagement (Hein, 1999: 30). However, even with the increasing pressures of industrialisation, the family maintained a modest income, eventually converting the business to a mill for potato flour.[12] In 1839, George Senior married Margaret McColl, later adding three half-sisters (Isabella, Louisa and Jane) to the close-knit family.

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[11] Two of MacDonald's brothers – John MacKay and James – died in childhood.
[12] This lasted until the potato-famines of 1846-48, at which point they changed to the far-less-profitable production of oat-flour (Hein, 1999: 32).

George Senior and his sons corresponded regularly until his death in 1858, and there is evidence of a warm, open affection between all members of their immediate family. Indeed, Rolland Hein ascribes social importance to their relationship, claiming that MacDonald's bond with his father is the reason for his standing 'amongst those thinkers of the nineteenth century who are responsible for replacing the wide-spread popular image of God as absolute tyrant with that of loving father' (Hein, 1999: 38). For MacDonald (as for many of his friends), this transference of the domestic-paternal onto the spiritual hierarchy is fundamental, upholding filial obedience as both a familial and religious duty. Nevertheless, in practice such obedience did not come without conflict. At the age of fifteen, MacDonald wrote to his father with the idea of becoming a sailor. He writes 'I should be sorry to displease you in any way', yet begs, 'I hope that you will not use your parental authority to prevent me, as you undoubtedly can' (MacDonald, 1840). This youthful plea – which even MacDonald admitted to being 'flighty' (MacDonald, 1840) – is an early example of MacDonald's acceptance of a paternal authority that, in later years, became far more dictatorial. Raeper notes that George Senior 'was someone whom MacDonald wanted to appease, but in practice he found it difficult' (Raeper, 1988: 74), and this is in particular evidence during 1846-1848, when MacDonald's occupational and financial uncertainties forced him to seek tutoring work in London.[13] In 1846, shortly after he arrived in London, he wrote to his father: 'I am very sorry for my conduct to you in many instances for many years back. I shall not say forgiveness for I know you have forgiven me – but I do hope opportunities may yet be given me to show you how much I love you, and that I am sorry for my behaviour' (Sadler, 1994: 14). However, during these years, George Senior's complaints regarding his son's occupational 'dithering' were sometimes sharp, provoking exasperated responses: 'You cannot know living at home, how money is needed, and though I confess not to have been so careful many times as I ought, I have confessed, yet I would not like you to be the judge of the amount of money required *on every occasion*' (Sadler, 1994: 31). The paternal intervention – and filial acquiescence – also extended to the region of personal health when, following a period of illness, George Senior demanded that his son give up his pipe.[14] MacDonald replied, 'I should not have much right to claim much love for you, if I would not give it up at your request [...] So no more tobacco for me. Joy go with it' (Sadler, 1994: 19). However, while Hein cites MacDonald's relationship with his father as the origin for his

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[13] At university he had considered both medicine and chemistry as possible professions, yet was also strongly encouraged to consider the Church.

[14] MacDonald's health was never strong; he suffered from weak lungs throughout his life, with bouts of pleurisy and asthma resulting several times in near-lethal lung haemorrhages.

marked paternalism, other factors must be taken into consideration, including his Scottish origins, his literary and philosophical predecessors, his social connections and his historical context. Within MacDonald's narratives (as for many of the Christian Socialists), such elements shade his construction of gender identity, allowing him to use manliness as a signifier for his designation of morality and moral choice within a changing socio-political landscape. As such, the question of manliness becomes a platform on which to debate themes of war, of Chartism, of urbanisation and of a domestically-oriented social reform.

Descended from survivors of both the 1692 Glencoe Massacre and the 1746 Battle of Culloden, George MacDonald has been described as 'first and foremost a Scot, and more than that, a Highlander and a Celt' (Raeper, 1988: 15). He was raised amid stories of the Highland Clans, whose paternalist structure is heavily romanticised by Duncan MacPhail (*Malcolm*, 1875) as government through filial devotion (MacDonald, 1875b: II, 147). Likewise, MacDonald was familiar with the work of James Hogg, Robert Burns and Walter Scott, and had a copy of James Macpherson's 1760 *Ossian* in Gaelic – fortunately with a Latin translation included, as (despite attending lessons) MacDonald himself had never been able to learn the original language (Raeper, 1988: 35).[15] The writings of James Macpherson and Walter Scott in particular conjured an image of Scottish heroic manliness that drew on a quasi-mythological Highland history, and fostered a sense of union between self and home that Hugh Sutherland in *David Elginbrod* (1863) attributes to his own Highland origins (MacDonald, 1863: I, 132).[16] Indeed, Hein claims that 'MacDonald stands readily to be compared to Scott, as well as to Robert Burns' on grounds of his 'vision of the eternal within the temporal' (Hein, 1999: 21), and it is true that MacDonald's writings capture an image of sentimentalised Scottish history, such as Sher describes as a 'general expression of Scottish national feeling' (Sher, 2005: 158). However, while it is not completely without justification

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[15] The topic of Robert Burns became one of MacDonald's most popular themes on the lecture circuit, particularly during his 1872 tour of America. While MacDonald's enjoyment of Burns's poetry is clear from the positive reviews of the American reporters, and from MacDonald's sometimes playful use of Scots in his novels, poetry and personal correspondence, he argued that the poet's 'weakness' for alcohol and 'sensual pleasures' made him bitter. Moreover, he claimed that Burns's early death was largely because, in the eyes of God, Burns was 'fighting on and making no headway' (Hein, 1999: 338).

[16] When James Macpherson published *Ossian* in 1760, he claimed that the epic had been collated from word-of-mouth Highland accounts. The narrator (Ossian) is based on a popular figure of Celtic legend, and publication of the volume gave rise to a popular belief that Macpherson had published a body of work genuinely attributable to the mythological bard. For MacDonald, the question of the volume's authenticity was of less importance than the feeling of 'connection' generated by the work. When Tennyson borrowed MacDonald's copy in 1875, he (like Hugh Sutherland in *David Elginbrod*) found himself more willing to believe it genuine after reading the Latin translation of the verse (Raeper, 1988: 336).

that Ian Campbell (1981) labels MacDonald a member of the Kailyard school, MacDonald's novels are as frequently critical of Scottish life and traditions as they are eulogatory.[17]

David Robb argues that MacDonald used novels to conduct 'a sensitive exploration of his Scottish origins [...] meditating on the relationship between those origins and the world of urban England' (Robb, 1990: 13). MacDonald's concern with such matters is evidenced in an 1853 letter to his father, when he reminisces about the field he and his brothers had played in as children – now strange 'with the iron nerves run through it, which makes the dear, rugged North one body with the warm, rich, more indolent South' (Sadler, 1994: 61). In this image, railway technology separates the field from MacDonald's memories of his childhood home, while simultaneously creating a conduit through which the perceived characteristics (both moral and physical) of North and South can pass. The body, overlaid by artificial iron nerves, becomes an intimate yet profoundly externalised metaphor for an alienated, potentially polluted 'home', uniting the personal and social fears generated by the transport revolution and the pressures of extensive urbanisation in Scotland. Although MacDonald lived the majority of his life in England (and his latter years in Bordighera, Italy), Douglas Gifford (1988), David Robb (1990) and Colin Manlove (1994) have each noted a vein of Scottish nationalism within his writings. However, it is a historical nationalism – one that looks back to a sentimentalised past to strike a contrast with the bitter conflicts of the industrial age. At once idealised as a Romantic, rural homeland and portrayed as a point of individual and ideological constraint, MacDonald offers us a vision of paradise corrupted by social and religious 'schism' (Robb, 1990: 15). While Sher comments that 'traditional Scottish religious values, such as a strong Calvinist work ethic and a belief in Scotland's special status as a covenanted nation' lent themselves to a sense of national pride (Sher, 2005: 151), I would argue that MacDonald instead portrays the widening rifts within the Scottish religious communities, together with the impact such rifts had upon social cohesion.[18] When a 'spirit of prophecy' sweeps through Glamerton in *Alec Forbes of Howglen* (1865), it precipitates such conflict that 'one might have thought they were revelling in the idea of the vengeance at

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[17] The 'Kailyard' refers to a late nineteenth century school of Scottish literature, recognisable for its promulgation of an idealistic, sentimental view of Scottish life. Writers such as J.M. Barrie and S.R. Crockett were notable members.

[18] In 1893, MacDonald wrote to his cousin to criticise the political actions of religious groups: 'I too have been for some time greatly dissatisfied with the Congregationalists, as they seem to be trying more and more to save the world from the outside by politics, and not by the rule of the Kingdom in the individual heart' (Raeper, 1987: 263).

hand, instead of striving for the rescue of their neighbours from the wrath to come'
(MacDonald, 1865b: II, 183). Likewise, the arrival of Conventiclers in *Malcolm* (1875)
almost incites a social rebellion against the Marquis, on the grounds that they were 'in the
mood to give - not their own - but those other men's bodies to be burnt on the poorest chance
of saving their souls from the everlasting burnings' (MacDonald, 1875b: III, 61). Such scenes
in MacDonald's novels mark a distinction between the literal Scotland and the ideal of
'Scottishness' – an almost á priori quality encapsulated in myth-structures and pastoral
imaginings.

Colin Manlove attempts to explain MacDonald's conflicted relationship with Scotland by
describing Scottish fantasy literature as the narrative of an author in exile from a homeland
that, while harsh, is nevertheless an escape from the moral and societal pressures of urban
England (Manlove, 1994). However, his survey approach leads him consider post-
Enlightenment Scottish Romantics such as James Hogg alongside both George MacDonald
and later Scottish writers such as Robert Louis Stevenson and J.M. Barrie, and therefore to
place less emphasis on the historical pressures affecting a Scot in specifically mid-Victorian
England.[19] In contrast, David Robb considers the role of nationality within MacDonald's
social network, noting that many of MacDonald's philosophical and political motivators were
Scottish, including Thomas Erskine, A.J. Scott, Edward Irving and Norman MacLeod (Robb,
1990: 17). With so many Scottish campaigners uniting (along with MacDonald) under the
banner of Christian Socialism – a movement heavily influenced by the philosophies of
Thomas Carlyle – Robb argues that MacDonald may have believed himself part of a
'Scottish-based moral regeneration for Victorian Britain' (Robb, 1990: 17).

As a young man, MacDonald was already known as something of a preacher and social
campaigner. At thirteen, he became the first president of the Huntley Temperance Society
(Hein, 1999: 40; Raeper, 1988: 34), and following his admission to King's College, Aberdeen
in 1840, he worked in the Sunday-schools alongside the Calvinist pastor and social-worker

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[19] While similarities can be identified between each of these writers, the temporal difference means that they
were subject to different cultural pressures, or were exposed to the same pressures with different levels of
intensity. With Stevenson's 1886 *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, for example, we could compare
the use of the doppelganger for the exploration of identity and identity repression, whether within the Scottish
context, the urban context, or in the context of a developing culture of hedonism. However, MacDonald's
exposure to the themes influencing Stevenson would have been limited; in 1886 his literary career was drawing
to its close, while his residence in Italy further separated him from contemporary social debate in Great Britain.

John Kennedy (Raeper, 1988: 51). During MacDonald's time in Aberdeen (1840-1845), the questions of poverty and insurrection were very much in the public mind. The 1843 Disruption of the Church of Scotland led to heightened religious tensions and the proliferation of Presbyterian denominations, while at the same time campaigns for and against the controversial Corn Laws were reaching new heights.[20] In the years that MacDonald knew him, John Kennedy was an active participant in these debates and others. Raeper describes Kennedy as a passionate campaigner on a national and local level. He spoke publically in favour of emancipation and against the Corn Laws, was an active temperance reformer and a frequent supporter of the Ragged Schools (Raeper, 1988: 51). However, MacDonald did not share Kennedy's rigid Calvinism; despite being raised a Calvinist within the Missionar Kirk in Huntley, he had never been able to reconcile the doctrines of the Elect and eternal punishment with his vision of a paternal God (Raeper, 1988: 50). When Kennedy became aware of MacDonald's 'Morisonian leanings', he was called to a meeting and dismissed from the Sunday-school (Raeper, 1988: 52).[21]

Chartism was also becoming a source of concern, both in Scotland and internationally. In 1841, MacDonald saw Fergus O'Connor (a Chartist leader and founder of the movement's newspaper, the *Northern Star*) speak at a rally in Aberdeen, and wrote home to reassure his father of the 'peaceful disposition' of the group (Sadler, 1994: 10).[22] However, by 1848 the Chartist Riots had broken out in Britain, and social unrest spread across Europe – fuelled by the publication of Karl Marx's *The Communist Manifesto* and also by the desperate situation in Ireland and the Highlands in the wake of the potato famines.[23] Although some literary works (such as Charles Kingsley's *Alton Locke*) continued to articulate the peaceful nature of

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[20] The 1843 'Disruption' came at the end of a 10-year conflict in the Church of Scotland over the question of sovereignty, and the level of interdependence of Church and State. In May 1843 a large portion of the Church of Scotland separated to form the Free Church of Scotland. The Corn Laws ensured that the price of corn was not affected by cheap imports from overseas, and therefore acted to keep grain prices high. As such, they were perceived by some to protect the interests of wealthy landowners even while the poorer classes struggled to afford food. The Anti-Corn Law League (led by Cobden and Bright) eventually persuaded Peel to repeal the Corn Laws 'at the expense of the agricultural interest' in 1846 – the same year that the potato famines swept through the Highlands (Hewitt, 2014: 12).

[21] James Morison was thrown out of the Church in 1843 following his controversial assertion that Christ died for all men, not merely the elect (Raeper, 1987: 51).

[22] Fergus O'Connor was a Chartist leader, and founder of the movement's newspaper, the *Northern Star*. MacDonald's comment is interesting, as O'Connor was recognised as a 'fiery' orator who advocated the use of force to 'obtain justice, and the acknowledgement of right' (Hewitt, 2014: 69).

[23] MacDonald visited Cork in June 1848 to fill a vacant pulpit for a period of three months. While there, he wrote scathingly of the welcome enjoyed by Queen Victoria on her visit to the country – a welcome that he saw as inappropriate, 'considering the state of the country' (Sadler, 1994: 32).

the majority of Chartists, Maureen Moran notes that the movement swiftly came to be 'associated in the public mind with radical extremism', and with a drive to 'destroy the social fabric in the name of political freedom' (Moran, 2006: 46). Donald Hall corroborates this, describing how Chartists in literature came to be associated with the image of a 'lower-class monster', and he cites John Ludlow's complaint that there was a 'practical atheism in the cry for Monster Meetings' (Hall, 1994: 52; 53). Ludlow's comment underscores the extent to which (in some circles) Chartism (or social rebellion) became synonymised with religious sectarianism, and with an image of the animalistic, uncontrolled male body.

The dangers of social and religious 'schism' were also extensively articulated by F.D. Maurice and A.J. Scott, both Broad Church ministers and social campaigners who lost their license to preach under charges of heterodoxy and heresy. Like MacDonald (who in later years became a close personal friend of both men), the root of their heterodoxy was a drive to unification, with Maurice exclaiming that the Book of Common Prayer was his one defence against the 'tormenting devils' of divergent doctrines (Vidler, 1966: 23). However, it is striking to note the similarity of the language used to describe the consequences (and potential resolution) of agitation amongst the working classes. Just as Maurice describes the various religious denominations as devils 'tormenting' the body of the Church, so does A.J. Scott portray social insurrection as the self-destructive action of one part of the body against another: 'if there be incapacity in the hands or in any other region rightly to discharge their proper function, the whole body suffers with it' (Scott, 1866: 266). Confirming the parallel between social and religious schism, he argues that 'The Chartists of 1841 were, it is true, only repeating […] the mistake of the High-Church party of 1841', and attributes both to the 'bitterness of party spirit' (Scott, 1866: viii; x).

In 1848, MacDonald was also struggling with the questions of religious orthodoxy and poverty. Despite his father's wish that he become a clergyman, he had maintained that he wanted his 'opinions & feelings & motives to *solidify* a little more. I wish to have more distinct & definite objects in view before entering on the work of the ministry' (Sadler, 1994: 16).[24] Since leaving Aberdeen in 1845, he had been acting as a tutor in London, experiencing

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[24] MacDonald's experiences here seem reminiscent of the experiences of Thomas Wingfold in *Thomas Wingfold, Curate*, who had embarked on a career in the ministry without any certainty in his own faith (see page 43).

first-hand the difficulties of financial hardship within an expensive urban environment.[25] It was at this time that he became a tutor for the Powell family, where he met his future wife Louisa Powell. With her support (and under paternal pressure to secure a stable income before marriage) he decided to pursue a career in the Church, and enrolled at Highbury Theological College despite serious reservations about the narrow, doctrinal teaching (Raeper, 1988: 62; 63; Sadler, 1994: 18). Indeed, his struggles with the Calvinism of his childhood persisted through his years at Highbury, and he finally left the college without a degree in 1850 (Raeper, 1988: 74).

It was while at Highbury that MacDonald saw A.J. Scott giving lectures at the Marylebone Institute in London (Raeper, 1988: 67) – lectures that in later years would significantly influence his writings and attitudes towards social reform. In 1848 (alongside his more well-known associates F.D. Maurice, Thomas Erskine and John Ludlow), Scott helped to form the Christian Socialist movement, to which MacDonald later became closely affiliated. Between 1848 and 1854, the movement produced two short-lived periodicals. The first, *Politics for the People,* described itself in the inaugural issue as an open forum for the debate of social issues such as suffrage, Capitalism and unemployment, yet Donald Hall instead notes that it was used primarily as 'a tool for education against radical social reform' (Hall, 1994: 48). Although the movement officially collapsed in 1854, their policies of social reform through civil education were perpetuated through the foundation of the Working Men's College at Red Lion Square in 1854, which professed to qualify specifically working *men* for the duties of citizenship (Maurice, 1866: vii). As such, the ideals of Christian Socialism – including the concept that paternalism and domestic harmony provide the basis for social stability – transcended the class barrier, even for those for whom it was a palpably unrealistic way of life.[26]

The philosophical basis for Christian Socialism came in part from Thomas Carlyle and S.T. Coleridge, and what Monika Class describes as their markedly conservative interpretations of

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[25] At this time, his family were likewise experiencing hardship as a result of the potato famines, and were therefore unable to send him much in the way of assistance. Compounding the problem, MacDonald's accommodations were poor and cold, impacting on his already weak health.

[26] Tosh, for example, notes that the domestic ideal involved a woman who remained perpetually within the home – an unworkable premise for the many working-class families who relied on a woman's income (Tosh, 1995: 18).

German Romanticism (Class, 2012: 193). Like F.D. Maurice and A.J. Scott, MacDonald was an avid reader of Carlyle and Coleridge, and shared their passion for the German Romanticism of writers such as Novalis, Schiller and Goethe (Manlove, 1994: 85).[27] However, as Class argues, Coleridge's reading of German Romanticism (like Carlyle's) separated the philosophy from a 'predominantly radical and dissenting milieu', thereby making it more palatable to conservative British readers (Class, 2012: 193). Coleridge in particular was so successful that the more left-wing J.S. Mill came to associate 'transcendental philosophies with conservatism' (Class, 2012: 192).

Formed in retaliation against the Enlightenment empiricism of philosophers such as John Locke and David Hume,[28] and also against the rationalism of René Descartes and the monism of Baruch Spinoza, German Transcendentalism argued that our understanding of the world is formed through a synthesis of experience (a posteriori knowledge) and intuition (a priori knowledge) (Kenny, 2000: 184; Simons, 1995: 13).[29] The seminal text was Immanuel Kant's *The Critique of Pure Reason* (1781), which argued that all experiences have at their core a universal 'truth' that can never be fully comprehended – one that is connected to the 'unconditioned necessity of all beings, namely God' (Kenny, 2000: 191). Following Kant, J.G. Fichte and G.W. Hegel posited that all experience is a dialectic formed between the external and internal worlds, with the implication that all experience therefore has at its core an element of the transcendental (Kenny, 2000: 207). For Hegel, this theory of dialectics was taken to show that the Ideal *can* be fully realised, but only through conflict (and the negation of non-idealised characteristics) – a concept that became the popular basis for Marxism. However, the same philosophies were also taken to articulate a desire for unification without conflict (or schism), whether through regression to an idealised past, or through the imposition of a unificatory standard. Stephen Prickett notes the impact that such philosophies had on Victorian society, particularly within the Church (Prickett, 1976: 10). Coleridge's desire to 'reinvigorate the all-but vanished ideals of the Established Church' in order to lift 'faith from the savage backbiting of sectarian politics' (Prickett, 1976: 50) fore-grounded

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[27] His admiration even led him press them on his then-fiancée, and Raeper paints a portrait of Louisa Powell worrying over volumes of Goethe and Carlyle even while she struggled to nurse her mother through her last illness (Raeper, 1987: 75).

[28] The empiricists argued that all knowledge comes from experience, and that *a priori* (or innate) knowledge cannot exist (Durant, 1953: 194).

[29] German Transcendentalism is also referred to as 'transcendentalism', the 'transcendental philosophies', 'German Idealism' and the 'continental philosophies' by different writers. It is closely associated with German Romanticism, which situated these 'ideals' within a historical 'golden age'.

F.D. Maurice's idea of 'the Church as a pre-existing universal spiritual society for all men' (Prickett, 1976: 50). However, for others, such as John Newman, this meant tracing the history of the Church back to its point of origin – a decision that led him to renounce Anglicanism in favour of Catholicism in the early days of the Oxford Movement.

Coleridge's interpretation of German Transcendentalism therefore suggests a drive towards unification under the banner of the 'universal ideal' – whether that ideal is one of religion, of class or of gender. For Thomas Carlyle, this sense of the universal ideal hidden within the transient was termed 'natural Supernaturalism' (Carlyle, 1888), invoking the idea of a moral constant within an era that saw upheaval in almost every aspect of life. However, in the hands of Carlyle (and the later Christian Socialists), this form of idealism gains a more political affiliation, with the implication that this unificatory ideal must be maintained for the health of the social body. Carlyle in particular extended this philosophy to the theme of manliness in texts such as *Sartor Resartus* (1831), *On Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History* (1841) and *Past and Present* (1843). Recognising the 'incompatibility of culture with the ordinary lives of most of the population', Carlyle worked to re-frame traditional manly characteristics for traditionally 'unmasculine' occupations within the trade or literary industries (Lyall, 2006: 153). In doing so, he grounded social roles and occupations with a transcendental manliness that was underpinned by a drive towards social and religious cohesion. The inter-relationship of these themes in *Sartor Resartus* (or 'The Tailor, Retailored') is particularly striking. Carlyle's portrayal of social and theological history through the language of clothes allows him to externalise those character traits deemed to be 'superficial', or otherwise redundant to the core question of manly identity. In the chapter 'The Dandiacal Body', Carlyle famously describes the 'dandy' as 'a Man whose trade, office and existence consists in the wearing of clothes' (Carlyle, 1888: 283) – a description that accounts for MacDonald's often-repeated disgust with the description of clerical office as 'the cloth'.[30] Indeed, Manlove describes *Sartor Resartus* as a depiction of Christianity and doctrine through the language of clothes, portraying Carlyle's dandy as at once an emblem of aristocratic foppishness, and one of religious sectarianism (Manlove, 1994: 70). Noting the foolishness of such 'schism', Carlyle's narrator advises that 'The beginning of all Wisdom is to look fixedly on Clothes [...] till they become *transparent*' (Carlyle, 1888: 66).

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[30] See page 65.

Carlyle's association of social characteristics and behaviours with 'manliness' demonstrates one way in which ideals of gender were used (in some circles) to shape public opinion on social or theological matters. It was a practice soon adopted by other writers, including Charles Kingsley and Thomas Hughes (both affiliated with Christian Socialism). In writings such as Charles Kingsley's *Yeast: A Problem* (1851) and Hughes's *Tom Brown's School Days* (1857) and *The Manliness of Christ* (1879), we see a physical ideal of manliness take shape alongside the moral and social conformation articulated by Carlyle. The result was the 'Cult of Athleticism' and Kingsley's so-called 'Muscular Christianity', in which we see moral behaviours represented through the powerful, muscular male body, while in contrast immorality becomes characterised by physical weakness and effeminacy.

Stephen Prickett comments that, 'For the Romantics, man is not an assemblage of separate faculties, but an organic unity in which the parts are subordinated to a whole that is beyond the measurement of empirical mechanism or logic' (Prickett, 1976: 132). Carlyle's representation of heroic manliness (like that of Kingsley and Hughes) describes conformity as the closest approximation of that 'organic unity', and therefore discourages behaviours that detract from the 'whole'. This same narrative is also evidenced by A.J. Scott's concern that social rebellion would lead to disunity between different parts of the 'body', and he cautions that when a portion of the body loses its life or function 'to all intents and purposes, it ceases to be of the body. The body acts upon it precisely like a foreign substance, and it acts upon the body precisely like a foreign substance' (Scott, 1866: 271). However, despite the conservatism of these readings, public approval of the transcendental philosophies was hazardous within an environment that remained deeply suspicious of those suffering from the 'taint' of German Romanticism – particularly in the Anglican Church, which was still reeling from the loss of John Newman and Henry Edward Manning to the folds of Catholicism. Many ministers (including F.D. Maurice and A.J. Scott) were tried for heterodoxy or heresy, and lost their positions within both ecclesiastical and teaching roles.[31] When MacDonald was called to become the minister for a congregation in Arundel, he likewise learned first-hand the national prejudice against religious heterodoxy – a situation that later led his wife Louisa

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[31] In *Malcolm*, Mr. Graham loses his position as School-master for 'teaching heresy' in the school (MacDonald, 1875b: III, 137), just as MacDonald had lost his position in the Sunday school on grounds of heterodoxy. It was not a rare occurrence.

to comment, 'Is it not fearful to think of the piety of Churches?' (Raeper, 1987: 99). Not only were his views on the possibility of atonement (i.e. that sin could be forgiven, and that an individual not of the Elect could ascend to paradise) condemned as discordant with the Scripture (Raeper, 1988: 91), but his controversial declarations that animals had souls and that 'riches favour stupidity' did not endear him to the more conservative of his wealthy parishioners (Raeper, 1988: 86). These factors (together with his professed love of German Romanticism and his emphatic dislike of sectarianism) swiftly led to accusations of religious subversion.[32] In 1853, following repeated cuts to his annual stipend, MacDonald was pressured into resigning his pulpit in Arundel. It was a devastating moment in his personal history, and the impoverished minister found himself forced to temporarily abandon his pregnant wife and infant daughter in order to search for work in the politically turbulent Manchester.

MacDonald's move to Manchester in 1853 triggered a sea-change in his social philosophy, his theology and his career – nor should it be surprising that the social milieu of Manchester should be the spur to launch him into the literary world. While in the 1830s and 1840s questions regarding the 'condition of England' had been raised by writers such as Thomas Carlyle and Benjamin Disraeli, the social problem novels of Charles Dickens, Elizabeth Gaskell and George Eliot (to name but a few) personalised the question in the Victorian mind. Indeed, texts such as *North and South* used Manchester as a focal point, portraying the horrors of 'Cottonopolis' through scenes such as the tragic death of Bessie Higgins. Greville MacDonald describes his father's perception of Manchester as 'a city of ugliness, fierce competition and atmosphere black with its factory surroundings' (MacDonald, 2005: 191), yet he acknowledges that at the same time, 'Manchester stood for liberty, even if the freedom they fought for had scarcely higher aim than more money for the few, less slavery for the many' (MacDonald, 2005: 192). It was in Manchester that MacDonald (with the support of A.J. Scott, now principle of Owens College in Manchester)[33] conceived his plan to open an independent chapel, believing that the turbulent culture would result in many individuals in need of an escape from the rigid orthodoxy of the established Church. Like the Gaskells, MacDonald began to preach on an ad-hoc basis for a wide variety of Christian

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[32] In 1851, MacDonald self-published a translation of *The Twelve Spiritual Songs of Novalis,* offering copies to close friends as Christmas gifts. That same year, he also wrote to his father denouncing sectarianism: 'I am neither Arminian nor Calvinist. To no system could I subscribe' (MacDonald, 1851, April 15).

[33] Playfully dubbed 'the embryo university of the Cotton Lords' by George MacDonald's father (MacDonald, 2005: 191).

denominations, travelling as far as Brighton and Liverpool for longer engagements. Between engagements, Scott helped him to find work as a tutor, and he began writing short pieces for *The Monthly Christian Spectator*.[34] One of these pieces – 'The Broken Swords' – was published in October 1854 just prior to the Battle of Balaclava and the famous charge of the Light and Heavy Brigades.[35] However, despite these many sources of employment, MacDonald's time in Manchester was a period of intense financial pressure and physical hardship. Never physically robust, his health collapsed repeatedly, making it almost impossible to attain steady work. Even when his dream of forming his own church became a reality with the foundation of a chapel in Renshaw Street in June 1854, he found that he was unable to attract many members outside his own immediate circle, and income was low (Raeper, 1987: 103). Salvation came in May 1855, when his narrative poem *Within & Without* was accepted for publication by Longman's.[36]

Within & Without is written in a very different style to 'The Broken Swords', being heavily influenced by Idealism rather than the gritty social context of the Manchester environment. This is at least in part due to the length of time taken to publish the volume, which was written between 1850-1851 – a few years prior to his difficulties at Arundel and his later move to Manchester (Raeper, 1988: 117). Nevertheless, Raeper comments that the poem stands 'strangely in the climate of the times' (Raeper, 1988: 117), documenting the aristocratic protagonist's theological struggles as he renounces his monastery for the love of

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[34] He soon gave regular lectures at the Ladies College on a range of literary subjects as well as natural philosophy (MacDonald, 2005: 218) and also coached several (mainly male) pupils in mathematics (Raeper, 1988).

[35] The Crimean War is extensively referenced in 'The Broken Swords', which provides a fascinating insight into the reconstruction of manliness necessary to a war-time environment. However, it also articulates the concept of manliness as underpinned by questions of class and authority, overlaying the social with the military paradigm in which manliness is dependent on a willingness to follow orders. For a full discussion of the role of the Crimean War in the creation of a new model of 'military' manliness, see Chapter 1: Rewriting Manliness – The Defender of the Homeland (page 1).

[36] *Within & Without* tells the story of a priest (Julian) who abandons his monastery in favour of his childhood sweetheart Lilia. He confronts and kills her violent suitor (Count Nembroni), and the couple take refuge in a busy urban environment. Unable to marry, they conduct an extra-marital affair which, despite resulting in a daughter (Lily) soon begins to place strain on their relationship. Fearing that their relationship is harmful to Julian, Lilia leaves him – while meantime Julian becomes convinced that she has left him for another man. Following several disturbing visions of violence (in which Julian fantasises about harming or killing Lilia to save her from further disgrace), he pursues her – yet suffers the tragic death of their daughter. It is only after he learns of Lilia's death that he realises her faithfulness. The poem concludes with him joining his 'wife' and child in a vision of paradise.

the heroine, Lilia.[37] What follows is a melodramatic narrative of extramarital love, unjust jealousy, guilt and redemption, with Lilia being upheld in death as a true wife despite their unmarried status.[38] It stands in sharp contrast to his later works, which are far less permissive to the concept of extramarital relationships.[39] Nevertheless, despite a modest circulation the poem *Within & Without* brought MacDonald to the attention of the literary circles. He received letters of approval from F.D. Maurice, Charles Kingsley and (perhaps most importantly) Lady Anna Isabella Byron (widow of Lord Byron), who in 1857 offered to become his patron. When MacDonald finally met her in 1858, he was candidly told to 'invite himself' to her home (which she affectionately called 'Liberty Hall') whenever he felt 'socially disposed' (Hein, 1999: 197). In 1859, she also assisted with the family's relocation to London from Hastings, where they had settled in late 1857 (partly for the sake of MacDonald's precarious health).[40] It was through Lady Byron that MacDonald became familiar with some of the most influential social reformers of the Victorian era, including Maria La Touche (and through her, John Ruskin), Margaret Oliphant, Charles Kingsley, Elizabeth Reid (founder of Bedford College, where MacDonald gave lectures in late 1859) and Matthew Arnold (Hein, 1999: 220).

Another early acquaintance was Octavia Hill, who MacDonald met through his lectures to the Womens' College in 1859. In later years, it is possible to see Hill's influence throughout MacDonald's novels on urban reform, particularly with the creation of characters such as Miss St. John in *Robert Falconer* (1868) and Miss Clare in *The Vicar's Daughter* (1872). In 1863 he also met John Ruskin, and established a close friendship that saw MacDonald become a confidante during Ruskin's exceptionally private affair with Rose La Touche. John Ruskin's impact on MacDonald's narrative style can be seen in his representations of the urban environment as an anathema to British morality, a perspective which is underpinned by Ruskin's rigid views on gender assignment and the role of domesticity in the national

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[37] One could perhaps be forgiven for seeing here a reversal of Cardinal Manning's decision to join the Catholic Church, as the protagonist finds himself beset by religious doubt while his brother monks are content to live a 'jolly life'.

[38] Following Julian's repeated concern that Lilia has been damaged by her relationship with him, he finally concludes 'My maiden! for true wife is always maiden / To the true husband' (MacDonald, 1855: 129).

[39] See, for example, the confessions of Juliet Faber in *Paul Faber, Surgeon* (page 236) or the chastisement of Catherine Weir in *Annals of a Quiet Neighbourhood* (page 216). It is possible that the change in tone can be traced to MacDonald's post-1863 friendship with John Ruskin.

[40] In Hastings, MacDonald met Charles Dodgson (Lewis Carroll), who became a close family friend (Hein, 1999: 221).

identity.[41] During the early days of their acquaintance Ruskin disagreed with some of MacDonald's literary characterisations. In 1863, he criticised the fairy tale 'The Light Princess' as being too sexually explicit (Ruskin, 1863, July 22) – then later took issue when MacDonald voiced Ruskin's complaint through the mouth of the disagreeable Mrs. Cathcart in the 1864 *Adela Cathcart* (Ruskin, 1864, April 18). He also made several criticisms of the novel *David Elginbrod*, stating his wish that the 'fallen woman' of the novel (Euphra Cameron) should be 'worried to death when she died' (Ruskin, 1863, June 20). Initially, it is clear that MacDonald was rather amused by Ruskin's delicate sensibilities (as can be seen in his representation of Ruskin as Mrs. Cathcart), however later novels (such as *Annals of a Quiet Neighbourhood* and *Paul Faber, Surgeon*) seem more closely aligned to Ruskin's principles.[42]

Other friends included Russell and Emelia Gurney, as well as the Leigh-Smiths. The Gurneys were prominent political campaigners. As Recorder for London, Russell Gurney oversaw numerous political movements, and was active in supporting the 1870 Married Women's Property Bill (Raeper, 1988: 430). He was also a passionate campaigner against the Contagious Diseases Acts, alongside his friend Josephine Butler. Meanwhile, Emelia Gurney and Barbara Leigh-Smith (later Barbara Bodichon) were early members of the Kensington Society, providing the MacDonald family with a level of familiarity with some of the prominent campaigners for political sexual equality. While there is little evidence that matters of politics entered their letters (a familiar frustration to MacDonald scholars, which McGillis (1995) attributes to MacDonald's hesitance in pinning down political ideas), during the 1860s the MacDonald house played regular host to intense discussions on women's rights. Indeed, remembering such debates, Greville MacDonald admits to being 'crushed at times by the conviction [...] that I, as a male, am still a worm' (MacDonald, 2005: 300). However, friendship did not necessarily lead to agreement, and MacDonald's political stance on many of the issues that concerned his friends – particularly women's rights – appears deeply ambiguous. While respect and intimacy eventually developed between the MacDonald family and the Miss Leigh-Smiths, George MacDonald's first reaction (during a trip to Algiers in 1864) was to name them 'rather fast, devil-may-care sort of girls [!] not altogether to our taste [sic]', and although they all seemed 'to draw and paint well' it was only the poorly Anna who

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[41] As detailed in, for example, *Sesame and Lilies*.
[42] See Chapter 6: Unmuscular Christianity – Obfuscating Femininity (page 167) and Chapter 7: Urban Environments, Sexuality and Domestic Control (page 207).

redeemed herself by being 'more sweet and womanly' (MacDonald, 2005: 270).[43] Nevertheless, the family were quick to welcome (if not always to accept) different viewpoints, and MacDonald and Emelia Gurney in particular maintained a warm correspondence until her death in 1896 (Gurney, 1902: 230).

Differences on political and social issues (such as the role and appropriate behaviour of women) were far from uncommon within the rather disparate network that formed around the Christian Socialists. Octavia Hill and F.D. Maurice were known to have regular disagreements over matters of feminine propriety (Darley, 2010: 78), while Charles Kingsley had no difficulty in supporting the controversial Contagious Diseases Acts during the years of Josephine Butler's campaigns, claiming that 'living near to Aldershot' (which had been operating under the Contagious Diseases Acts since 1864) he was 'a witness to the fearful need of a certain Act of Parliament' (Kingsley, 1870, January). Placed alongside so many powerful and passionate campaigners, MacDonald could scarcely isolate his narratives from political rhetoric. However, the diversity of political opinions within his circle goes some way in explaining the sometimes startling differences between direct narration and political implication found in his work. Colin Manlove acknowledges this tension, describing MacDonald as a 'nervous seer [...] who felt he ought to be a part of the world and controversy, but for reasons good and bad [...] did not want to be' (Manlove, 1975: 58).

In terms of active political engagement, MacDonald was far removed from Octavia Hill, John Ruskin, Emelia Gurney or the Leigh-Smiths, and unlike many of his friends, his lack of financial stability made controversial narratives economically unsafe. While MacDonald himself could work up little enthusiasm for some of his novels (describing them as 'work undone that snarls at my heels') his financial situation was constrained enough to force him to appease the dictates of the literary market (MacDonald, 2005: 414). Manlove corroborates this, noting that 'MacDonald was concerned much more with proving himself as a poet than as a novelist, and wrote in the latter role largely to make money' (Manlove, 1975: 56). Indeed, when Ruskin read *Adela Cathcart* in 1864, he rather mischievously suggested that

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[43] Barbara Leigh-Smith (later Barbara Bodichon, founder of Girton College), Anna Leigh-Smith and Isabella Leigh-Smith were the illegitimate children of Benjamin Leigh-Smith (a relatively wealthy MP) and Anna Longden (a miller's daughter). Elizabeth Gaskell disliked Barbara in particular, claiming that 'She is – I think in consequence of her birth, a strong fighter against the established opinions of the world, – which always goes against my – what shall we call it – *taste*?' (Hirsch, 2010: 2).

MacDonald was 'book-making', before asking 'Why should one <u>not</u> [sic] water one's wine a little' (Ruskin, 1864, April 18). In 1870, a letter from Alexander Strahan (MacDonald's friend, literary agent and some-time publisher) likewise demonstrated the pressure on MacDonald to write for the popular market, going so far as to beg him to write 'a series of letters from the Vicarage of Marshmallows', commenting that 'Anything of the Vicarage tone would do' (Strahan, 1870, August 27).[44] In 1876, his friend Henry Cecil also emphasised the extent to which some of MacDonald's narratives were influenced by his relative poverty, defending what he called 'the perfervid penny dreadful element' in the novel *Thomas Wingfold, Curate* (1876) on the grounds that 'a story to him is not simply art but *bread*' (Cecil, 1988: 2). As such, unusual or controversial styles – such as the fantasy elements employed in *Phantastes* (1858) and *Lilith* (1895) – gave way to more marketable realist or gothic narratives.[45] Accordingly, in 1863 the novel *David Elginbrod* (a sensation novel) was published by Hurst and Blackett at the insistence of Margaret Oliphant, on the grounds that 'the author is not only a man of genius but a man burdened with ever so many children' (Raeper, 1988: 180). It rapidly became a success, and was followed by more than fifty books across a wide variety of genres, including realist novels, sensation novels, volumes of poetry, plays, sermons, hymns, literary critiques, fantasies and fairy tales.

The 1860s were years of relative affluence for the MacDonald family; MacDonald's novels were selling well, and he was also gaining fame for his fairy tales (for example, 'The Light Princess' and 'The Golden Key'), which were published individually in periodicals such as *The Monthly Christian Spectator, The Argosy* and *Good Words for the Young,* and collectively in *Adela Cathcart* (1864), *Dealings with the Fairies* (1867) and the later *Works*

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[44] The 'Vicarage of Marshmallows' was the setting for MacDonald's *Annals of a Quiet Neighbourhood* (1867), a curious blend of Realism and romance that describes the experiences of a minister – Mr. Walton – within a largely disaffected parish. It was followed by two sequels – *The Seaboard Parish* (1868) and *The Vicar's Daughter* (1872).

[45] Despite being regarded today as a pioneering work of fantasy literature, MacDonald's *Phantastes* met with mixed reviews and initially failed to sell (Raeper, 1988: 154). The early failure of the story is unsurprising. Albert Pionke cites both the generic novelty and poor reviews as reasons for its lack of success (Pionke, 2011: 21), while William Gray describes the low public appetite for works of fantasy prior to the publication of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* in 1865 (Gray, 2009: 47). Even after MacDonald's fantasies gained popularity and acceptance, it was within a select readership. Indeed, in the September 1866 issue of *The Argosy*, the poet Alexander Smith would class *Phantastes* as one of the 'unpopular books' that create a 'bond of union' between those few who love them (Smith, 1866: 328). In contrast, John Ferguson McLeannan in the March 1866 edition described the need even for 'men of genius like Alexander Smith, or George MacDonald' to 'become easy-writers to turn an honest penny' (McLeannan, 1866: 328). He admits, 'Their pot-boilers may not always be "first chop," to use a vulgar expression' yet insists that 'if they do three of them, one will be a work of merit' (McLeannan, 1866: 328).

of Fancy and Imagination (1871). However, the despite a significant increase in income the family were far from wealthy, particularly since in by the end of 1867 they numbered eleven children. That year, the family moved to 'The Retreat' in Hammersmith, a large home on the banks of the Thames that later became famous as William Morris's 'Kelmscott House'. It was also only a short distance away from Octavia Hill's notorious housing projects at Paradise Place and Freshwater Place, which were conceived (with financial assistance from John Ruskin) as a means to moral improvement of the tenants by way of improvement in their environment. It was at this time that MacDonald found himself paying closer attention to the social problems consequent in particular to urbanisation; in 1867 he wrote to Louisa, saying 'I have been anxious – for the first time in my life about the future of our country, and the kind of days on which our children will fall; but it is only for moral considerations. I feel I must do something for it and them for my poor part' (Raeper, 1988: 266). The novel *Robert Falconer* was published that same year, a bildungsroman-style narrative that focuses on the protagonist's search for a dissolute father in the heart of urban London. Struck by the poverty and misery he sees, Falconer and his friends form a society to help the poor, fulfilling many of the same roles that Octavia Hill and her 'ladies' fulfilled for their tenants.[46]

In *Robert Falconer*, as in the earlier *Alec Forbes of Howglen* and *David Elginbrod*, we are offered a graphic – at times brutal – vision of conflicted human identity and self-dislocation within the newly formed metropolis. Indeed, Falconer's search for his 'Father' could equally be considered a search for his own identity, just as Alec Forbes suffers the loss of his identity within the morally-corrupt heart of Aberdeen. Previously a childhood hero, Alec finds his masculine identity pulled apart in 'a chaos of conflicting atoms' when he is presented with the moral choices attendant on urban life (MacDonald, 1865b: I, 303). In scenes strikingly reminiscent of Sedgwick's analyses of Girardian erotic triangles in, for example, James Hogg's *Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (Sedgwick, 1993: 97),[47] Alec comes into contact with his doppelganger Patrick Beauchamp, forming a homosocial bond that is at once oppositional and assimilatory, with the resulting tension routed through sexualised (and

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[46] For a full analysis of MacDonald's representation of urban reform in *Robert Falconer*, see page 130.
[47] René Girard theorised that all conflict is born out of 'mimetic desire' – the bond between two individuals whose attraction leads to an appropriation of each-other's desire, with the result that their attraction culminates in rivalry (Girard, 2008: 281). The object of desire in this relationship therefore becomes secondary to the bond between the rivals.

therefore permissible) female bodies.[48] In contrast, Robert Falconer discovers his manly identity by acting as a moral voice throughout the narrative, and exists as a reformative influence over, not only his own father, but the metropolis as a whole. Within these narratives, MacDonald gives explicit lectures on the moral reform of the urban environment, and reflects the success of these reforms through newly-solidified domestic identities within the working classes, and the manly development of his heroic protagonists.

However, MacDonald's interest in urban reform was not limited to his narratives; while MacDonald lacked the money to be a direct financial supporter of Octavia Hill's projects, he did hold regular entertainment evenings for both tenants and potential funders. These 'entertainments' often included plays performed by the MacDonald family, including *The Pilgrim's Progress* (with MacDonald playing the lead Greatheart), *The Tetterbys* and *The Blue Beard*.[49] In these days, MacDonald was at the height of his literary popularity; his writing was in demand, as was his time on the lecture circuit.[50] Likewise, his social circle was growing increasingly diverse. Writers, poets, artists and reformers were regular guests at The Retreat, in particular Edward Burne-Jones, Arthur Hughes, (who illustrated many of MacDonald's stories, most famously *At the Back of the North Wind*) and Alexander Munro, who modelled the famous 'boy and dolphin' statue in Hyde Park on MacDonald's son Greville (MacDonald, 2005: 301).[51] In 1869, MacDonald also became editor of *Good Words for the Young*, a children's magazine launched by MacDonald's friend and literary agent Alexander Strahan in November 1868. Previously edited by Norman Macleod, the magazine attracted many well-known authors, including Charles Kingsley, Dinah Maria Murloch Craik, Jean Ingelow, Hans Christian Anderson, W.S. Gilbert and (of course) George MacDonald (Oakley, 2013; Raeper, 1988: 269). Indeed, many of MacDonald's most famous stories for children - *At the Back of the North Wind*, *Ranald Banerman's Boyhood*, *The Princess and the Goblin* and *Gutta Percha Willie* – were first serialised in *Good Words for the Young*.

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[48] For an analysis of the relationship between Alec Forbes and Patrick Beauchamp in the urban environment, see page 114.

[49] The MacDonald 'acting troupe' centred around MacDonald's eldest daughter Lilia Scott MacDonald, who had some renown as an actress despite never being permitted to follow profession (Raeper, 1988: 265). The scripts were written largely by Louisa MacDonald, and a collection entitled *Chamber Dramas for Children* was published by Alexander Strahan in 1870 (Hein, 1999: 397).

[50] MacDonald was invited to lectures (primarily on literary figures such as Robert Burns, Shakespeare and Tennyson) in locations from Glasgow to Bradford (Raeper, 1988: 267).

[51] MacDonald had known Munro for many years, and through him had become acquainted with many members of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, including Maddox-Brown and the Rossettis (MacDonald, 2005: 301) – although his friendship with Ruskin may have made a relationship with Millais somewhat strained.

However, the magazine never achieved the same success as its established sister periodical *Good Words*, and when it began to fail under MacDonald's editorship in 1871, Strahan voiced the suspicion that the decrease in circulation was 'because there is too much of what he calls the fairy element' – a comment that led MacDonald to believe that he could find a better 'market for that kind of talent in America' (MacDonald, 2005: 412). In 1871, MacDonald's career was sufficiently advanced for him to take this risk, and in 1872 he embarked on an eight-month lecture-tour of America, along with his wife Louisa and his eldest son Greville.

MacDonald's novels were incredibly popular in America – so much so that he had sustained a substantial loss of income from pirated editions of his works. It was partly to establish contacts with the American publishing houses that he embarked on his tour (Hein, 1999: 333), although it also gave him invaluable exposure to the literary elite of Boston, Philadelphia and New York. In Boston, they were hosted by James T. Fields (an old friend, and one of the first to suggest the tour). Through Fields, they were introduced to Harriet Beecher Stowe, Emerson, Longfellow and Oliver Wendell Holmes. Other old friends, Russell Gurney and Emelia Gurney, were also present, as Russell Gurney had recently been 'appointed as British representative of the Commission to settle British and American claims arising out of the Civil War' (Hein, 1999: 337). Later, in New York, he met J. G. Holland (editor of *Scribner's Monthly*) and Holland's managing editor Richard Watson Gilder, a distant relative of MacDonald's, who became a very close family friend (Hein, 1999: 341).

MacDonald's trip to America opened his eyes to the scale of his popularity across the Atlantic; his lectures were a phenomenal success, at times attracting crowds of over 3000 attendees (Hein, 1999: 340). Indeed, he was so successful that the tour organisers (Redpath and Fall) complained that had they known, they could have charged a far higher fee for his appearances (Hein, 1999: 340). Talks on Robert Burns were by far the most popular, and he wrote of the amusement of each audience when he spoke 'Two words which invariably come in in the Burns lecture, viz: 'Devil' and 'drunk'' (Hein, 1999: 342). However, it was an exhausting trip, and MacDonald was plagued by poor health, culminating in repeated attacks of asthma, bronchitis and blood-spitting that had doctors advising him to stop lecturing, however much the lecture organisers pressed him to increase his schedule (Hein, 1999: 346).

Nevertheless, before they finally left for England, MacDonald was once again shown evidence of his incredible popularity in America: however controversial his unorthodox religious opinions might have been at home, in America he was becoming renowned as a preacher – so much so that a fashionable church in New York offered him their pulpit at the extraordinary salary of $20,000 per year (Hein, 1999: 366; Raeper, 1988: 302). While the homesick MacDonald declined almost immediately, it is a testament to the standing they granted him that the offer was made.

Although MacDonald returned home with the full expectation of visiting the United States again a few years later, his ambition was never realised as life in England grew increasingly difficult. In 1875, both MacDonald and his daughter Mary became seriously ill, causing the family to forsake from the 'damp and misty' conditions of Hammersmith in favour of Great Tangley Manor (near Guildford, Surrey), and later Italy.[52] It was a financially difficult move for them, as they were unable to surrender the lease on The Retreat until William Morris took over the property in April 1879. In addition, MacDonald was growing increasingly concerned about the actions of his friend John Ruskin, particularly as regards his relationship with the much younger Rose La Touche.[53] Following months of secret meetings and bitter arguments, haunted by the spectre of mental sickness, Ruskin finally wrote to MacDonald: 'she is mad [...] nor have I just cause to be angry with her, but only to be grieved for us both and angry enough with the people who have driven her to this' (Raeper, 1988: 281). In February 1875, he grieved that Rose was 'entirely broken, like her lover' (Ruskin, 1875, Feb 25), and on 25th May 1875, following months of insanity, she died. Rose's death had a devastating impact on Ruskin, and within two years he suffered a severe mental breakdown, destroying his relationship with many of his friends (including his close friendship with Octavia Hill) in the process.[54]

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[52] Following the family's move to Guildford in 1875, Mary MacDonald's condition continued to deteriorate, precipitating the family's decision to leave England for the warmer climate of Italy in 1877. However, the move was in vain, and Mary died early the following year. To make matters worse, within a few short months MacDonald's son Maurice also died, following a violent lung-haemorrhage. Over the next decade, tragedy was to strike repeatedly, and Maurice was followed by Grace MacDonald, her daughter Octavia, and also MacDonald's beloved eldest daughter Lilia.

[53] In 1868, MacDonald had broken off his close friendship with Rose's mother Maria La Touche at Ruskin's request (Ruskin, 1868, March 7), on the grounds that Maria was bitterly opposed to Ruskin's courtship of her daughter.

[54] During the early days of his madness, Ruskin wrote letters to several of his close friends following a hallucination in which he married Rose, who at that time had been dead for almost two years. George

These were very difficult years for MacDonald, not only personally, but also in terms of his career. The literary and artistic environment had begun to shift, and by 1876 the novels that had raised MacDonald to the height of fame were beginning to fade into obscurity. One particular problem seems to have been the shifting critical attitude towards art, and the development of the aesthetic movement in the wake of Walter Pater's publication of the controversial *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* in 1873. Pater's concept of life as a perpetual motion of myriad actions, reactions and impressions led him to assert the value of living for the sake of transient pleasure and beauty – a perspective that came to be associated with hedonism, and an almost homoerotic representation of (particularly Hellenistic) masculine beauty. Indeed, it was largely through this work that Classical Greece began to be taken by the Aesthetics and the later Decadents as a celebration of 'archaic sensuality' and 'the irrevocable fallenness of their own world' (Fiske, 2008: 14). Although Pater's *Renaissance* was largely condemned at the time of publication, over the following years the cry of 'art for art's sake' gained strength, leading to a growing perception that texts embracing the moral didacticism of MacDonald's works were old-fashioned.[55] In consequence, the critical reception of his novels became increasingly disdainful (Hein, 1999: 390), and the MacDonald family began to face new financial difficulties as his books stopped attracting the high sums of the 1860s and early 1870s.[56]

In these later years, MacDonald's novels assume a noticably darker tone, particularly as regards their treatment of the theme of sexuality. Images of 'unnatural' sexual activity in the form of rape, enforced marriage, prostitution and necrophilia (although notably not homosexuality – at least not openly) become commonplace, with the manly hero once again standing in defence of the strictly hierarchical domestic environment. Through these years, MacDonald's portrayal of gender assignment also grows increasingly rigid; *femme fatale* characters such as Lady Lufa (*Home Again*, 1886), Sepia (*Mary Marston*, 1881) and Lilith (*Lilith,* 1895) proliferate. Gothic features, such as hidden identity narratives, vampirism,

MacDonald was the recipient of one such letter dated 21st February 1878, in which Ruskin described his joy at having 'got married – after all, after all' (Ruskin, 21st Feb 1878).

[55] Hein remarks that MacDonald continued to serve 'life over art', even if helping his readers achieve 'moral and spiritual beauty' required the use of didacticism and 'direct statements of intention' (Hein, 1999: 373).

[56] The Cowper-Temples helped, however, raising a sizable purse to help them. (Hein, 1999: 404), and in 1877 he was also awarded a Civil List pension, leaving MacDonald to consider that 'The queen is not quite so stingy as I had prognosticated' (Hein, 1999: 415).

opiates, seductions and thinly-veiled rapes, haunt the margins of the narrative. However, once again and it is the father – the pacifier, the unifier, the holder of authority – that resolves the narrative tensions in an unworkable, and increasingly unbelievable, domestic harmony. Order is reinstated, and the non-conforming elements of society (the sexualised women, the unregulated Capitalists, the seducers and the rebellious workers) are safely contained within a domestic paradigm, and therefore prevented from 'infecting' other members of society with their disruptive values.

Throughout his life and his oeuvre, MacDonald's reaction to social and political events evolves, yet retains its basis in the Idealism and unificatory principles of Carlyle and the Romantics, infused by a sense of national identity that has its origins in martial and domestic constructions of what it means to be 'a man' in a continuously shifting Victorian society. It is therefore essential that we consider MacDonald – his background, his society and the political discourses of his social network – when we approach his narratives. I argue that the lens that brings his narratives into focus is the lens of manliness, which throws the hierarchical structure of his world-view into sharp relief, yet which also reveals growing fissures along the lines of class and gender, to which he reacts with increasing levels of control and (sometimes) violence. Many of his later novels are dark, quintessentially *fin de siècle* narratives, in part reflecting the uncertainty of the shifting power dynamic of his era – yet also in part due reflecting a very personal sense of individual grief and loss. In the years from 1880 until his death, MacDonald witnessed the death of his wife, five children and one grandchild, while he himself (who had always believed that he would die young) continued to thrive. His final novel (*Salted with Fire*) was published in 1897, and a few months later MacDonald suffered a severe stroke that left him unable to speak. He passed away on 18th September, 1905.

An Overview of the Thesis

Since his death, the life and works of George MacDonald have been by stages divorced from his social and historical setting. New editions of his novels are published on a regular basis, usually heavily abridged or 'edited for today's reader' – a situation that led John Pennington to refer to a 'George MacDonald industry' (Pennington, 1987: 40). Within these works,

context is stripped away and overlaid with editorial assumptions regarding their value in terms of 'universal truth'. Michael Phillips in particular, who labels the Anglican, anti-sectarian MacDonald an 'evangelical pioneer' (Phillips, 1986: 7), has become famous for re-writing MacDonald's novels from a religious perspective that severely distorts the original text (Pennington, 1987: 41). Indeed, ignoring historical context entirely, Phillips writes that MacDonald's 'message was essentially a spiritual one, and it is only in that context that he can be understood and his work fully appreciated' (Phillips, 1986: 7). In doing so, he fosters a narrow reading of MacDonald that disregards his applicability to any but a religious audience.

Phillips's position is regrettably far from unique within MacDonald studies. In part, we can trace this to the writings of C.S. Lewis, G.K. Chesterton and W.H. Auden, all of whom have mentioned his name as a major influence (Wolff, 1961: 4; Hein, 1999: 19). However, their focus what they call MacDonald's *mythopoeic* ability (Lewis, 1946: viii; Johnson, 2011: 2), has fostered transcendental over historical critiques of his works. In addition, we can cite the actions of Greville MacDonald, whose biography of his father has become a staple text for any MacDonald analysis. Quite aside from the inevitable bias that arises from the author's relationship to his subject, Greville's desire to further his father's perceived status as visionary can be seen in his willingness to destroy aspects of his legacy in order to preserve the myth of his genius. He admits to destroying the manuscript of *Seekers and Finders* after deciding that it should remain unpublished (Hein, 1999: 215). Other acts include the collective purchase and destruction of an 'unsuitably illustrated' edition of *Phantastes*, (MacDonald, 2011: vii) and the public condemnation of Joseph Johnson's *George MacDonald: A Critical Appreciation* (1905) – one of the earliest critical accounts of his father's narratives, and one that Greville claims to be 'wildly inaccurate' (MacDonald, 2005: 2). This attempt to mythologise his father has fostered an environment in which many are unwilling to dispute MacDonald's place as a Victorian visionary. While subsequent biographies have attempted to address this imbalance (Raeper, 1988; Hein, 1999; Triggs, 1986; Saintsbury, 1987), the titles of the major biographies (invoking the 'Victorian Visionary' and 'Mythmaker'), highlight their indebtedness to the critical tradition established by C.S. Lewis and Greville MacDonald.

This has resulted in unfortunate trends within critical literature discussing George MacDonald, and David Robb notes that 'It has taken a long time to begin to shift the C.S. Lewis-derived consensus that MacDonald's novels are to be valued only for what they contain (their Christianity) rather than what they are' (Robb, 1990: 12). While Jodi Gallagher argues that 'the removal of social context could be read as a distortion of MacDonald's meaning' (Gallagher, 2009: 126), until recently MacDonald's references to contemporary political issues went largely unremarked in critical debate. Discussing *Lilith* (1895), Gallagher notes the oscillation of critical accounts between 'those characterized by [...] the "biographical heresy" and by banal Freudian interpretation', and she laments the paucity of critical accounts that explore the narrative's 'social and historical context as a product of the *fin de siècle*' (Gallagher, 2009: 126). Similarly, Max Hastings notes the tendency of MacDonald criticism to focus on 'the spiritual realms, giving less attention to the social aspect of his work' (Hastings, 1992: 78).

The 2011 conference 'George MacDonald Among His Contemporaries' (held at St. Andrews University, Scotland) was the first academic conference intended to focus on MacDonald as a social and historical figure, rather as a writer of mythopoeic, Romantic, fantastical or religious narratives. This has opened the way for a wide variety of new critical interpretations of MacDonald's work and impact, ranging from explorations of the Scottish context by academics such as David Robb and Colin Manlove (Robb, 1990; Manlove, 1994), to investigations of his social interactions by Jeffrey Smith and Ginger Stelle (Smith, 2012; Smith, 2013; Stelle, 2005). Of key importance to my thesis are the works of Roderick McGillis, Albert Pionke and Naomi Wood, who have each drawn attention to MacDonald's attempts to define manliness in his novels, even while their focus has remained primarily on his works of fantasy (McGillis, 2003; Pionke, 2011; Wood, 1993). Roderick McGillis in particular remains one of the only academics to approach MacDonald from a 'queer' perspective, investigating his characterisations as a form of 'anti-identity politics' (McGillis, 2003: 89). In this thesis, I hope to extend McGillis's work to the exploration of MacDonald's social context – whether in Scotland, in the city, in the home or in the workplace – viewing manliness as the linchpin that unites these disparate discourses. While my reading differs markedly from his conclusion that MacDonald is a 'subversive' writer, his gender-based analyses of MacDonald's work have been an invaluable source of inspiration.

For this thesis, I have I have elected to adopt a thematic structure that is yet broadly located in different time periods, considering a particular set of discourses and social events in connection to the narratives published in each era. Key examples include the Crimean War at the outset of MacDonald's literary career, the Contagious Diseases Acts at the height of his popularity, housing reform and tenancy debates (including Clearance narratives) as his popularity began to wane, and the themes of the *fin de siècle* during his final years. However, the core discourses associated with these social movements were wide-ranging and complex, and cannot be easily tied to a single time period (or even any one event). The sexuality discourses that found legal expression in the Contagious Diseases Acts, for instance, demand an exploration of sexual representation in the 1850s as well as the continuing role of the prostitute after the Acts were repealed in 1886 – yet these debates were also influential during the re-negotiation of the gender-power dynamic that characterised aspects of the *fin de siècle*. Debates on housing and tenancy reform likewise extend beyond MacDonald's involvement in Octavia Hill's housing projects to the conflicts that fuelled rural displacement and emigration within Ireland and the Highlands for most of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The boundaries between discourse and narrative, narrative and event are fluid, and as such, defy rigid definition.

In the first chapter ('Rewriting Manliness – The Defender of the Homeland'), I consider the impact of the Crimean War and the Manchester environment on MacDonald's representation of both physical and social manliness. In particular, I draw attention to MacDonald's identification of the Soldier Body as a hybrid of two disparate archetypes of manliness: the Romantic (effeminate?) pacifist of a peacetime environment, and the animalistic, physicality required of men in a time of war. However, this 'Soldier Body' is not restricted to the battlefield. Through close textual analysis of three different works ('The Broken Swords', 'A Dream within a Dream' and *Adela Cathcart*) I demonstrate that the qualities of the Soldier become absorbed into different discourses and different social environments, yet consistently articulate the need for regulation and obedience, with the Soldier Body (however defined) acting in defence of the national and domestic home.

In the second chapter (Class and Employment: Manliness in the Workplace), I extend my consideration of the Soldier Body to other areas of male social interaction – this time

investigating the Soldier as a deliberately constructed, unificatory ideal of manliness within the workplace. Through the sublimation of different forms of labour, MacDonald comes to associate 'gentlemanly work' with a work ethic that prioritises 'divine service' over remuneration, thereby appearing to strip labour of the material considerations of class. However, we soon see that this dematerialisation of labour is an illusion, being underpinned by a demand for social cohesion and quiescence. As such, questions of sectarianism or 'schism' – whether religious or political – are shown to be at root 'unmanly', cementing MacDonald's ideal of manliness as one who strives for unification by willingly accepting his allotted place in society.

The third chapter ('Homosocial Interaction – the Recognition of Manliness') explores the representation of the Soldier Body within the home, looking specifically at the homosocial networks that form between MacDonald's male characters to ensure the smooth transmission of authority from man to man within the domestic environment. The chapter is split to consider the male domestic role in three stages, investigating the manly qualities and duties required of the son, the husband and the father, while also demonstrating the social damage caused by a failure of the authority paradigm within the home.

In the fourth chapter ('Men in the City – Victims and Reformers'), I shift my focus away from the identification of manliness within different social environments to approach MacDonald's representation of the relationship between men and the city, both in terms of individual identity and social awareness. Within MacDonald's corpus of urban-centred narratives, I see MacDonald's move to Hammersmith in 1867 as a pivotal moment, signalling his introduction to a new, more reform-focused social milieu. While I initially consider the city as an alienating, identity-shattering 'fairy land', my analysis of MacDonald's later texts explores the role of manliness as an agent of social change through individual reform. These analyses are read in the context of MacDonald's involvement with Octavia Hill and John Ruskin, who saw the urban environment (particularly the condition of housing, sanitation and the lack of free space) as antagonistic to individual moral development.

Within these first four chapters, my focus is primarily on the construction and characterisation of an idealised manliness – a paternalist Soldier Body that works towards

unification and the resolution of social and spiritual unrest. However, within MacDonald's narratives we are also presented with heroic characters defined by their androgyny, whose lack of physical power instead articulates a spiritual purity uncontaminated by contact with the material world. My fifth chapter ('Saintly Androgyny') explores the construction and context of these androgynous characters as at once spiritual ideals and effeminate men. Here, I consider androgyny as an expression of social injustice, observing the victimisation of the effeminate within the Capitalist environment, and the formation of a bond with the natural world that allows the articulation of a form of social Darwinism. In this way, MacDonald is able to frame the actions of his androgynous characters as the actions of those upholding obedience and submission to MacDonald's representation of a 'natural law' – a law that is readily overlaid onto the inter-related authority hierarchies of class and domesticity.

In the sixth chapter ('Unmuscular Christianity – Obfuscating Femininity'), I extend my consideration of the 'ineffective' androgynous body to explore the association between spiritual purity, social inefficacy and the feminine. Roderick McGillis argues that MacDonald 'encourages us to reconsider our attitudes to sex roles and sexual stereotyping' (McGillis, 1992: 10). However, while many of MacDonald's narratives include powerful female characters (such as North Wind and the Wise Woman) the text underlying their construction does little to confront inequalities in gender politics. Emphasising MacDonald's differing treatment of the male and female body, this chapter therefore investigates the mechanisms by which the feminine body is separated from the material world, emphasising the varied expressions of intangibility that combine to characterise her as a reflection of idealised femininity.

The removal of physical attributes of feminine characters in the sixth chapter leads me to the final chapter of this thesis – 'Urban Environments, Sexuality and Domestic Control'. Here, I draw all of my previous arguments to their logical extreme, exploring the way in which MacDonald's heroic man – his Soldier body – regulates the disturbing fissures revealed by his imposition of rigid class and gender controls. I open my argument in opposition to Chapter 6, taking the premise that where femininity is marked by the obfuscation of the physical body, unfemininity must be marked by overt physicality. Throughout the chapter, I consider the implications this has for the operation of authority relations between the

'unfeminine' woman and the Soldier Body within discourses relating to prostitution, the sexual double-standard and marital rights.

Like many of his contemporaries, MacDonald's narratives describe a close association between domestic harmony and national security. These themes are entwined in many of his narratives, from 'The Broken Swords' (1854) in the early days of his career to *What's Mine's Mine* (1886) and *Lilith* (1895) at its zenith. It is through the actions of the heroic man – the Soldier Body – that this domestic environment is established and maintained, and as such, the appropriate development of (and transmission of) manly authority is portrayed as essential for the moral health of the nation. Diverse conflicts – including military conflicts, religious sectarianism, social unrest and the changing power-dynamics of gender – are viewed through this lens, revealing an impetus for unification and pacification that exists at the heart of MacDonald's social politics. Appearing as a force against social disorder, the Soldier Body juxtaposes the martial and the domestic in a series of passages which appear disconcerting to a modern readership, yet which were neither atypical nor revolutionary for his era. Within these narratives of failed domesticity, contemporary discourses – such as those relating to sexuality, to war, to animal rights or to education – split the male and female identity between those who uphold the domestic environment, and those whose subversive behaviours must be contained. David Holbrook notes that 'beneath the respectable surface of strict Victorian moeurs and religious devotion, we may detect an unconscious murderousness directed against women' in MacDonald's fantasies (Holbrook, 2000: 65). However, like Wolfe, Holbrook cites the cause as MacDonald's 'projections of his own fear and hatred of women', a reading which overlooks the complexities of gender discourse through the years of the Contagious Diseases Acts to the *fin de siècle* (Holbrook, 2000: 65). I do not set out to show that MacDonald supported violence against women, nor that he was anything other than a passionate believer in what he saw as social justice. However, nor do I argue (as David Neuhouser does) that 'on most issues he [MacDonald] held a more enlightened view than most of his contemporaries' (Neuhouser, 2007: 13). MacDonald's philosophy – strengthened by the philosophies of close companions – conceived of social justice as the product of a sanctified domesticity that likewise stood at the heart of national security. Narrative closure is therefore reached with the achievement of domestic stability and security, governed by a successful patriarch, with the feminine woman as the spiritual heart of the home that the true man – whether father, teacher or soldier – must protect, even from herself.

Chapter 1: Rewriting Manliness – The Defender of the Homeland[57]

In this opening chapter, I consider the representation of manliness within some of MacDonald's earliest narratives, paying particular attention to the way in which MacDonald borrows from pre-existing discourses to articulate a new form of heroic manliness during the years of the Crimean War: that of the Soldier. This is not to claim that MacDonald was unique in his approach; similar martial overtones can be found in the 'muscular Christianity' of Charles Kingsley, in the 'moral athleticism' of Thomas Hughes, or in the mythologizing heroic verse of Alfred Tennyson. Nor do I claim that this masculinising martial rhetoric originated with the Crimean War. However, as I shall outline over the following pages, the politics of the conflict lent a new edge to already familiar discourses arising out of the context of a shifting economic and social environment, characterised by urbanisation and Chartism. As a result, we see how MacDonald's ideal of manliness – his heroic Soldier – is founded upon the conservative discourses of Thomas Carlyle and the Christian Socialists, becoming equally applicable to the battlefield as to the socially restive Manchester environment in which MacDonald lived at the outbreak of the Crimean War. Using the examples of the 1854 short story 'The Broken Swords' and the poem 'A Dream within a Dream' (published in his 1857 collection), we see how the image of the Soldier – the Ideal man – overlays the social hierarchy with a military (and eventually, domestic) structure that foregrounds both the danger of rebellion, and the danger of blind obedience to one who is not 'a father'.

The years between the Battle of Waterloo and the declaration of war in Crimea saw vast changes sweep over the English (and Scottish) landscape, moving power from the hands of the landed aristocracy to the entrepreneurial middle classes, and moving the population from the rural environment to the newly industrialised city.[58] The changes were particularly evident in northern England and Scotland, where the populations of the manufacturing cities swelled with people displaced from rural areas by technological change and the threat of poverty. Moreover, advancements in technology (in terms of agriculture, factory technology and transportation) created an atmosphere of cultural dislocation, a lack of stable identity. This was particularly true of manliness, since the industrial revolution had replaced

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[57] The first part of this chapter is an extension of 'Military Bodies and Masculinity in "The Broken Swords"', previously published in the anthology *Rethinking George MacDonald: Contexts and Contemporaries* (Neophytou, 2013).

[58] As previously discussed on page ix.

traditional forms of manly employment with the 'unmanly' world of commerce, triggering a national obsession regarding the question of what it meant to be 'a man'. In Scotland especially, these changes involved the redefinition of a cultural identity that was still heavily influenced by stories of legendary Highland warriors. Heroic tales of the Scots Greys at Waterloo lent to a Scottish sense of national pride in the military (Hutchinson, 2005: 184), and Heather Streets notes that contemporary military discourses identified Highland soldiers with other groups of racially-defined fighting men (namely the Punjabi Sikhs and the Nepalese Gurkhas) as 'the British Empire's fiercest, most manly soldiers' (Streets, 2004: 1).[59] In *Past and Present,* Thomas Carlyle likewise asserted the martial superiority of Scottish men, since Scotland's success in the independence wars allowed Scotland to enter the United Kingdom 'as an equal' (Martin, 2009: 4; Carlyle, 1847: 12). As such, Martin notes that 'Scotland's role as a standard-bearer for wild, rugged masculinity long outlasted the heyday of Romanticism, maintaining and increasing its sway during the Victorian era' (Martin, 2009: 2). However, during the long period of peace between the Napoleonic and Crimean wars, even this martially-based manly identity was threatened, and characterisations of physical manliness – and perceived physical power – increasingly became the prerogative of the 'violent' poor and the labouring classes, while the national power lay in the hands of an 'effeminized' economic class (Martin, 2009: 6). The difficulty is exemplified in Charles Kingsley's 1851 *Yeast: A Problem*, in which he complains about the growing tendency to associate male effeminacy with morality.[60] He exclaims that 'at first, your ideal man is an angel. But your angel is merely an unsexed woman; and so you are forced to go back to humanity after all – but to a woman, not to a man' (Kingsley, 1899: 282). Kingsley's criticism reveals much about the rhetoric that underpinned characterisations of gender within his world-view. The representation of the angel as '*merely* an unsexed woman' (my emphasis) reveals his consideration that the angelic – and indeed the feminine – is *less* than the 'ideal man' should be.

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[59] In MacDonald's *The Portent* (1864), the Highlander hero Duncan Campbell enlists with the Scots Greys (MacDonald - 'Scotch Greys') at Waterloo. During this conflict, he suffers a severe wound to the head that triggers a realisation of his identity as a man whose father is dead, whose brother is lost, whose property has passed into other hands – and whose beloved (Lady Alice) has been abandoned to the control of her abusive family (MacDonald, 1864b: 168).

[60] Kingsley's comments contrast the work of the earlier Scottish writer Henry Mackenzie, whose 1771 *The Man of Feeling* articulated a sentimentalised view of Scottish manliness that by Kingsley's time had become unfashionable, being associated with physical weakness and effeminacy.

For Kingsley, as for Carlyle before him, the distinguishing feature of manliness was the existence of a tightly-controlled virility, the loss of which is reflected in the appearance of 'figures of liminal or divided identity' such as effeminate men, human 'monsters', masculine women or social rebels (Adams, 1995: 153; 88; 17; Alderson, 1998: 18). In MacDonald's narratives, such figures are exemplified by the demonic seducer Herr von Funkelstein in *David Elginbrod,* the monstrous Maiden of the Alder in *Phantastes* or the insidious, morally-corrupting doppelganger of *Alec Forbes of Howglen.* According to James Eli Adams, such figures 'incarnate instabilities within the regimen of middle class manhood' (Adams, 1995: 112), revealing deep-rooted fears that the rapid changes in the socio-economic environment posed a threat to both the moral identity of manliness, and to the middle class man as the centre of Victorian social power.

In 1843, Carlyle's *Past and Present* had attempted to resolve the apparent dichotomy between national and physical power, positing the 'Captain of Industry' as a new form of heroic manliness, and attempting to dissociate entrepreneurship from its associations with 'Mammonism and *laissez-faire*'.[61] In doing so, he styled the wealthy factory owners as 'heroic leaders' of the working classes, striving towards the spiritual and moral regeneration of the nation (Diniejko, 2009; Carlyle, 1847: 193). However, Kingsley inscribed his arguments with a deeper physical dynamic, articulating a growing fear that the balance between male 'virility' and male 'self-control' was being offset, leaving physical power in the hands of the immoral, and self-control in the hands of those with no 'power' to contain. His solution was to reject the moral construction of male effeminacy, choosing instead to externalise the 'power' of men in a physical representation of muscularity. This process was later (to his dismay) dubbed 'muscular Christianity' (Fasick, 1993: 108), and like Kingsley, MacDonald was wary of the term, not least because the rhetoric linking morality and muscularity was readily adopted by other social discourses.[62] For some of MacDonald's contemporaries (such as Thomas Hughes and the artist George Reid), these principles grew into the 'cult of athleticism', associating morality with physical health and the virtues of exercise. This in turn linked the concepts of morality and martial skill, justifying the moral

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[61] MacDonald's representations of men in the workplace are analysed in

Chapter 2: Class and Employment – Manliness in the Workplace.

[62] In the 1863 *David Elginbrod Mr.* Arnold uses the term 'muscular Christian' to mock the physically strong protagonist (MacDonald, 1863: I, 229), while Ralph Armstrong (*Adela Cathcart,* 1864) concedes that many laugh at 'what, by a happy hit, they have called Muscular Christianity' (MacDonald, 1875b: II, 21).

(and physical) basis of British Imperial rule (Adams, 1995: 108)). Such associations were problematic for the asthmatic and often sickly MacDonald, who was regularly lectured by his friends on the benefits of strenuous physical activity.[63] Moreover, Adams notes that Kingsley's 'school' was in part derived from debates on health and sanitation (Adams, 1995: 108). Michael Brown corroborates this, describing a developing martial dynamic to medical communications during the years of Edwin Chadwick and Thomas Southwood Smith's 1848-1854 sanitation campaigns (Brown, 2010: 592).[64] The close connections between these and later debates on housing reform and domestic violence should also be noted, drawing a parallel as they do between uncleanliness, poor health, poverty, physical weakness and immorality.[65] Therefore, between the Carlylean restyling of entrepreneurial manliness, and Kingsley's writing of muscularity as the physical expression of balanced power and control, the manly ideal of the mid-Victorian era was intrinsically defined in relation to middle class status and the possession of social power.

It is within this context that I look on the Crimean War as a pivotal moment in the mid-Victorian construction of manliness – one that focused the public mind on the concept of manliness as a triune of physical body, social status and moral judgement. The British reaction to the Crimean War was heavily influenced by representations of both class and gender, as is evidenced by media depictions of the main agitators as the 'Russian Bear' and the Turkish 'Sick Man of Europe' (Bloy, 2002). These two characterisations are indicative of a war being portrayed through the image of the gendered body – yet it is a body gendered in terms of its moral basis (the strong but animalistic 'Bear') and perceived power (the ineffective 'sick man'). Moreover, heavy levels of military recruitment from the lower social classes triggered concern over the moral and physical capabilities of the British army, and Streets notes that while there was intense interest in the politics of the conflict, the social circumstances of these new recruits inhibited public enthusiasm (at least initially) for the individual men engaged in military action (Streets, 2004: 22). However, as the conflict

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[63] George Reid in particular frequently exhorted him to exercise more frequently, despite the fact that physical exertion left him vulnerable to life-threatening lung complaints. See page 42.

[64] Thomas Southwood Smith was Octavia Hill's grandfather. Despite a difficult family dynamic (following his divorce from Octavia Hill's grandmother), Southwood Smith's campaigns have been credited as part of the inspiration behind Hill's reformist activities (Darley, 2010: 26).

[65] I approach MacDonald's representation of the city – including the representation of charitable endeavours and reform projects, in Chapter 4: Men in the City – Victims and Reformers.

continued, this derogatory characterisation of lower-class recruits was increasingly countered by the representations of the war in the national media.

The Crimean War was the first conflict to be waged in the press as well as on the battlefield, with the first-person accounts of the reporter William Howard Russell appearing in *The Times*. In an unprecedented act, Russell travelled with the army as a civilian reporter, and Streets claims that the reports of 'independent press members – writing from the scene of action – played a significant role in shaping wartime public opinion' (Streets, 2004: 23). While Russell regularly reported on the heroism of the working-class rank-and-file soldiers, he was scathing about the incompetence of the aristocratic commanders. The ensuing media debates saw figures such as Lord Raglan, Lord Lucan and Lord Cardigan alternately celebrated and vilified as reports on the Battle of Balaclava and the doomed Charge of the Light Brigade reached an increasingly astonished public (Hibbert, 1961). This has led Stuart Currie to declare that it was 'not a novelist's war, principally because it was a journalistically sensational one' (Currie, 2006). That is not to say that there were no other literary representations of the Crimean War – although the notable literati may well have been cautioned by the explosive public reaction to Tennyson's 'Maud'.

'Maud' was published in the eagerly-anticipated *Maud and Other Poems* (1854), which also contained his more well-known 'The Charge of the Light Brigade'.[66] However, while 'The Charge of the Light Brigade' is a passionate eulogy for the six hundred servicemen who died in the doomed charge at Balaclava, 'Maud' strikes a very different, more troubled tone. Edgar Shannon describes the poem as Tennyson's 'most vehement effort as a social critic and reformer' (Shannon, 1953: 408), yet 'Maud' left critics sharply divided between supporters of the 'Peace Party' (who saw the poem as a justification of war in all circumstances), and those who saw the conflict as a source of national pride.[67] Part of the difficulty lay in the poem's constant attempts to destabilise its reader, whether through the shifting rhyme and metre, or

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[66] In March 1882, Tennyson also published the little-known 'Charge of the Heavy Brigade at Balaclava, October 25th 1854' in *Macmillan's Magazine*, in an attempt to raise money for the veterans of the Crimean War. However, politicians elected to ignore the veterans and to give the money to other causes, prompting Rudyard Kipling to write the scathing 'Last of the Light Brigade' to highlight the plight of veterans ignored by their own government.

[67] In the *Westminster Review*, for example, George Eliot accused Tennyson of 'hating peace and loving war' (Shannon, 1953: 408), and even Charles Kingsley – a close personal friend of Tennyson – declared the poem to be 'a sad falling off' (Shannon, 1953: 404).

through Tennyson's use of a mentally unstable narrator. Uncertain whether passages spoken through the mouth of the narrator were Tennyson's own comments, or the comments of a deranged mind, critics were left to find their own meaning – which (naturally) followed the path of their own political and ideological inclination. Meanwhile, Tennyson's intended message was rendered secondary to a public reaction that was every bit as divided and self-contradictory as that of his narrator. Indeed, in many ways 'Maud' exemplifies the troubled mid-Victorian mind-set that is reflected in literature of the period. While Currie (2006) identifies no 'body' of Crimean literature, he describes a 'new sensibility in some of the marginal literature of the time' that manifests as 'extreme alienation, sometimes as an impassioned reclaiming of the place of individual agency and perception in the face of technology and implacable bureaucracy' (Currie, 2006). The intense individualism of 'Maud', together with the unreliability of the narrator, focuses the question of war on a single soldier of uncertain identity and uncertain stability, who views his military service, not in light of the actual political battle, but as a means to anchor his existence overseas within the clear-cut rules of right and wrong, rather than in the dissociative society of his homeland.

Ignoring the question of whether Tennyson's message is pro-or anti-war, 'Maud' is useful in articulating the identity-based and class-based discourses that surrounded the question of military intervention in Crimea, since Tennyson's unstable narrator clearly associates the social problems of the British homeland with the enactment of the literal war overseas. Michael Thorn and Mauricio Aguilera both note that Tennyson's political poems from the 1850s are commonly regarded as 'patriotic popular songs or jingoistic outbursts of hysteria' (Thorn, 1992: 258; Aguilera, 1999: 12), yet the problematic final Act of 'Maud' (in which the narrator appears to celebrate military activity) is preceded by the narrator's consideration that open warfare is preferable to the secret, domestic warfare encouraged by Capitalism:

> But these are the days of advance, the works of
> the men of mind,
> When who but a fool would have faith in a
> tradesman's ware or his word
> Is it peace or war? Civil war, as I think, and
> that of a kind

> The viler, as underhand, not openly bearing
>
> the sword (Tennyson, 1855: I:7, 1-8).

In this passage, Tennyson's narrator identifies the hidden war of the homeland – an unacknowledged 'civil war' in which the rich drive tenants to destitution, only to sell them 'chalk and alum and plaster' for bread (Tennyson, 1855: I:10, 5-6). In the same passage, he describes 'vitriol madness' as the consequence of social madness, and foretells a future in which 'the spirit of murder works in the very means of life' (Tennyson, 1855: I:10, 7-8). Tennyson's comments echo those of Carlyle, who complained that under Capitalism 'Our life is not a mutual helpfulness; but rather, cloaked under due laws of war, named 'fair competition' and so forth, it is a mutual hostility' (Carlyle, 1847: 198). However, Shannon notes that it was Tennyson's war philosophy, not his 'scornful diatribe on the Mammonism of England', that was most frequently discussed (and often attacked) by the reviewers (Shannon, 1953: 401).

Shannon's review of the media reception of 'Maud' underscores the extent to which positive reviews perceived the Crimean War as a conflict at once on an international and a domestic scale, combating external aggressors at the same time as resolving social tensions driven by Capitalism and the peace-time environment. Studying reviews in *The Times*, *The Illustrated Times* and *The Edinburgh Review*, Shannon notes a sense that many reviewers saw the War as 'the salvation of the country from evils far more to be dreaded than any which excite the peacemongers' (Shannon, 1953: 401; Dallas, 1855, August 25). For Aguilera, as for these early commentators, the Crimean War in 'Maud' exists independent of the actual conflict, being a 'metaphorical vehicle to embody the idea of a state free from all the contradictions of the Capitalist system' (Aguilera, 1999: 18). Likewise, the army (separated from the literal military context) becomes 'the paradigm of the perfect social structure [...] a hierarchical, unified and leader-controlled group' (Aguilera, 1999: 18). The narrator's decision to join the war is therefore portrayed as the re-claiming of an identity previously lost in the turmoil of Capitalism – a loss of self that is enacted through the violent death of his father.[68] Within the army, he exists outside the 'madness' of a Capitalist society, re-discovering his identity as a

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[68] We are led to believe that the death of the narrator's father was suicide, resulting from economic ruin through unwise speculation (Aguilera, 1999: 13).

man – and a soldier – within a strictly regimented hierarchy based on apparently clear-cut principles of right and wrong.

The public response to 'Maud' is interesting, not least because it demonstrates the divided reaction to the concept of war in Crimea. Moreover, Tennyson's poem provoked controversy on a national scale, owing largely to the celebrity of the poet, and to the sense of anticipation that preceded the volume's release. Inevitably, the writings of the then-unknown George MacDonald could not hope to provoke similar levels of debate within any but his friends and family. Nevertheless, a few months prior to the publication of 'Maud', MacDonald had entered the war debate with 'The Broken Swords' – a short story that (like 'Maud') explores the parallels between class conflict and military action through the lens of a lost and reclaimed masculine identity. 'The Broken Swords' was published in the October 1854 issue of *The Monthly Christian Spectator*, mere weeks before the Battle of Balaclava, and before poor communication and the loss of supply ships resulted in the death of hundreds of soldiers on the plateau above Sebastopol. It was also written in the weeks before MacDonald attended F.D. Maurice's opening address at the Working Men's College in Red Lion Square – an address which articulated the desire of the Christian Socialists to educate working men so that they might be fit to hold social responsibility (Maurice, 1866: vii). At this time, MacDonald lived in the politically turbulent Manchester – the stronghold of Cobden and Bright (leaders of the Peace Party and founders of the Anti-Corn Law League), and also a city that came to be seen as the urban face of Capitalist conflict.

It is this writing of Crimea from within the Manchester environment that I wish to examine in this first chapter, drawing attention to the Carlylean rhetoric that underpins MacDonald's class-driven representation of the conflict. Maureen Martin argues that Carlyle's words in *Past and Present* were intended to 'change established attitudes toward industrial activity and offer a new way to think about heroic manliness'– one that allowed the holders of national power to reclaim their masculinity (Martin, 2009: 6). This association between manly power and national power was readily absorbed into martial rhetoric, emphasising the extent to which the definition of a 'manly identity' could be seen to influence the definition of a national identity. As a result, in many discourses the concepts of manliness and nationhood became synonymous, allowing MacDonald to describe soldiers as 'the true national wealth',

and the holders of idealised manliness (and indeed femininity) as heroic individuals lying in readiness 'for the hour of their country's need' (MacDonald, 1886: III, 108). In this way, MacDonald's depiction of idealised gender characteristics – particularly idealised manliness – allows questions of national health to be enacted through the representation of the Soldier – his moral conduct, his body, and (crucially) the performance of his social role. In doing so, he creates a template of idealised manliness that is informed by military discourse – a Soldier body that acts to resolve conflict, yet which in later narratives is able to act independent to the literal martial environment.

Military Manliness in 'The Broken Swords'

'The Broken Swords' was not the first text to be written, or even published, by George MacDonald, yet it is the first to truly encapsulate the political and social 'spirit' of his era. While 'The Broken Swords', like many of MacDonald's earlier narratives, operates from a basis of transcendental unification (in the construction of its manly 'hero'), it distinguishes itself by its interaction with contemporary discourses, both those surrounding the war in Crimea, and those surrounding the homeland debates of Capitalism, rebellion and social mobility.[69] Moreover, we see a clear articulation of cultural alienation – of the experiences of a young man displaced from his romanticised homeland into a martial world where homosocial status is negotiated without the boundaries of moral constraint. As such, I argue that it was the intensely-charged Manchester environment – the Victorian face of industrial-driven alienation and conflict – that provided the spur for MacDonald to launch his literary career. Meanwhile it was the outbreak of war in Crimea that focused his attention on the social importance of manliness, and on the extent to which manliness and class formed different aspects of an overarching cultural discourse relating to the moral – and physical – health of the homeland.

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[69] Earlier texts include the 1846 poem 'David' (published in the *Scottish Congregational Magazine*), *The Twelve Spiritual Songs of Novalis* (self-published as a gift for friends in 1851) and 'The Bell' (a short story later renamed 'The Wow O' Rivven', published in *The Monthly Christian Spectator* in April, 1854). The 1855 narrative poem *Within and Without* can also be included as it was written in 1851, four years before it came to be accepted for publication. While each of these texts demonstrate the influences of transcendentalism and religion on MacDonald's world-view, the influence of social politics can be more acutely observed after MacDonald's move to Manchester in 1853.

Like many of his contemporaries, MacDonald was concerned by the growth of political instability between Russia and Turkey – the more so after diplomatic efforts failed, leaving his brother John trapped in Moscow and the subject of an assassination attempt (MacDonald, 2005: 167).[70] Yet in many ways, MacDonald's representation of the Crimean War in 'The Broken Swords' (like that in 'Maud') speaks less to the actual political conflict than it does to the social controversies of the United Kingdom. In particular, 'The Broken Swords' individualises both conflicts, using close narration to follow the experiences of a young ensign, expelled from the army after finding himself morally incapable of obeying the commands of his superior officers. What follows is a gradual realisation of individual identity, agency and manliness within a military environment, together with the discovery that manliness and martial success can only exist in collusion with both moral courage and self-control. The process of identity-development is described by MacDonald as a 'Christian tragedy' – a narrative structure that forms the basis of many of his future novels. He writes, 'the heart [...] seeks knowledge and manhood as a thing denied by the maker [...] so sets forth alone to climb the heavens, and instead of climbing falls therefore into the abyss' (MacDonald, 1854: 635). Failing to perceive that manhood is an inborn or learned quality that cannot be obtained by force, the 'hero' of the Christian tragedy turns his back on the 'maker' and 'falls into the abyss' as a result of his own struggles for masculine recognition. Following this spiritual 'fall', MacDonald concludes the narrative pattern with the protagonist realising 'I have sinned against my *Maker* – I will arise and go to my *Father*' (MacDonald, 1854: 635).

The reclassification of God from 'maker' to 'father' is a key feature of MacDonald's work, as indeed it was in that of his contemporary Charles Kingsley. As with MacDonald, Kingsley's 'manly' characters are regularly imbued with the authoritative and social statuses associated with paternalism, allowing both writers to uphold the authority of the Father through comparison to a patriarchal God (Fasick, 1993: 105). For MacDonald, the comparison is particularly marked in 'The Castle: A Parable' – a short story included in the 1864 novel *Adela Cathcart*. In 'The Castle: A Parable', the authority of the father is absolute, despite his persistent absence from the narrative. Isolated in a tall castle, his sons and daughters are given a series of rules to obey, and are expected to follow them in the belief that their father will one day return. The clear Christian parallel between the father and God situates the

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[70] This story is also retold in the novel *What's Mine's Mine* as the experience of the character Ian Macruadh.

domestic environment (and obedience to the domestic hierarchy) as the crux of both manly and spiritual development, and marks fatherhood as the final stage in male physical, spiritual and social evolution.[71] Like 'The Castle: A Parable', 'The Broken Swords' is implicitly concerned with the development of spirituality and social responsibility in young men, whether in the home or on the battlefield. In consequence, it re-sets familiar cultural discourses on the nature of manliness within the frame of contemporary political events. Moreover, by establishing a connection between the martial environment and socially-defined manliness, MacDonald was able (like Tennyson) to use the authority structures of the military as a template for hierarchical obedience within the microcosm of the family, and within Victorian society as a whole.

Roderick McGillis writes that MacDonald participated 'in the reconfiguration of what it means to be a male' (McGillis, 2003: 98).[72] However, this can be claimed for many writers in the Victorian era, albeit within vastly different discourses and political agendas. MacDonald's construction of manliness is far removed from other contemporary forms of masculine re-fashioning, as in for instance the self-help treatises of Samuel Smiles, the political sensationalism of Wilkie Collins, or more overtly the later Hellenistic works of Walter Pater and John Addington Symonds, and the decadent aestheticism of Oscar Wilde.[73] Nevertheless, while MacDonald was far from influential politically, his texts exemplify the muscular, paternalist reconfiguration of manliness taking place amongst Christian Socialist writers such as Charles Kingsley and A.J. Scott – writers (and reformers) who were concerned with a wide range of societal issues that found expression in the 'muscular Christianity' arising out the discourses preceding the Crimean War.

'The Broken Swords' was first published in *The Monthly Christian Spectator*, a periodical that (like the Christian Socialist movement as a whole) had a strong focus on the juxtaposition of Christian teachings and political events. In 1854, topics as diverse as Ragged

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[71] For a deeper analysis of 'The Castle: A Parable', see page 93.

[72] McGillis deliberately uses the word 'queer' according to its meaning within Victorian context: 'that which is puzzling or confusing, that which confuses' (McGillis, 2003: 88). As such, he distinguishes his argument from one of sexual identity, adopting instead the Foucauldian sense of 'queer as describing an "anti-identity" politics' (McGillis, 2003: 89).

[73] Although stylistically reminiscent of the popular sensation novels of Wilkie Collins (particularly *The Woman in White* (1859)), MacDonald's clear portrayal of his religious and social beliefs through the paternalist relationship of Hugh Sutherland and David Elginbrod distinguishes it from the work of Collins, whose attacks on social convention (particularly the institute of marriage) lent force to his narratives.

Schools, the 1851 Census, cholera and parliamentary reform were hotly debated alongside detailed political analyses of the Crimean War, and it is this context (as well as the actual text) that gives 'The Broken Swords' its contemporary, political edge. However, the martial dynamic was not the only way in which new forms of manliness were framed, and even within publications like *The Monthly Christian Spectator* readers were also invited to evaluate manliness in relation to other spheres of male social interaction, including the workplace, homosocial 'clubs' and boys' brigades, and the domestic environment (Houston, 2010: 636; Markovits, 2009). Indeed, following the wartime environment of the 1850s these non-martial constructions grew increasingly prolific, with writers translocating the debates of martial manliness to other, non-military environments. As such, when 'The Broken Swords' was republished ten years later as part of the 1864 *Adela Cathcart* (a narrative primarily concerned with domestic life rather than martial action)*,* its political edge appears deliberately blunted. Contextual references are removed, making the narrative less obviously a comment on Crimea. By generalising the context MacDonald is able to transfer his critique of military manliness away from the battlefield, situating the Soldier body (as an agent of action and defence) within the male-ordered workplace and home. Moreover, in *The Monthly Christian Spectator* 'The Broken Swords' is a disconnected narrative; one of many stories and essays specifically focused on current events. By contrast, in *Adela Cathcart* 'The Broken Swords' is part of a cohesive narrative that does not reference the wartime environment except in an anecdotal fashion, using military references to confirm the inherent manliness of non-military characters. Therefore, I argue that the short story's presentation of manliness and the male body plays a different role in each text, delineating contrasts in a continually evolving political morality. As a result, issues of class conflict, citizenship, sanitation and foreign policy become fluid themes in an overarching debate that carries social masculinity from a periodical concerned with politics and the wartime environment, into an era of domestic reform.

The nature of manliness was extensively debated in *The Monthly Christian Spectator*, which in 1854 published a triptych of essays on the mental, moral and domestic claims of young men. The author indicates the importance of his subject, writing: 'the national boyhood moves in constant subordination to them [young men], considers them its standard, courts their company, defers to them as superiors, receives their opinions without *examinat*ion [sic], and copies their peculiarities' (Anon, 1854: 133). The influence of young men as both role-

models and a source of social change was a subject which provoked great anxiety during the 1850s, particularly after the outbreak of war. Looking back from 1899, William Butler comments, 'to-day it is not easy to understand the state of the public mind at the moment the nation was about to enter upon a great struggle with Russia. England was entirely unprepared for war' (Butler, 1899: 15). His assertion that 'It was a good year for a young solider to begin the life of a man' was founded upon the collapse of the 'long peace', suggesting that a wartime environment would stimulate the development of masculinity (Butler, 1899: 15). However Butler also acknowledges that England had grown complacent in military matters since Waterloo, voicing the common suspicion that the quality of manliness had grown similarly complacent (Butler, 1899: 15). Susan Walton likewise argues that the outbreak of war in 1854 lent new force to the cultural redefinition of masculinity, in particular response to media complaints that 'luxury and wealth, together with a long period of peace, had made the stock quality of Englishmen deteriorate' (Walton, 2009: 234). Her comments are upheld by Laura Faisick, who describes the martial tones underpinning Kingsley's portrayal of manliness at this time (Fasick, 1993: 105). Kingsley's representation of Christ as a warrior contradicted traditional images of unregulated masculinity, asserting a moral dynamic to martial action.

Recognising a widespread retaliation against Romantic ideals of effeminate men, or effeminate portrayals of men in a commercial environment, Walton describes the increasing popularity of the 'Beard and Moustache Movement' as the articulation of a cultural need to reconnect social manliness with physical masculinity (Walton, 2009). However, prior to the outbreak of the Crimean War the beard was also considered to be a statement of radical political affiliations such as Chartism (Oldstone-Moore, 2005: 7).[74] In the following years, cultural associations between facial hair, animalistic impulses, poverty and military violence acted to polarise opinions on desirable masculine qualities in a time of war (Walton, 2009; Oldstone-Moore, 2005). Directly engaging with this debate, the bearded MacDonald opens the narrative of 'The Broken Swords' by displacing a childlike, Romantic protagonist into the heart of a martial conflict. In doing so, he alienates his protagonist from the moral and societal rules of his homeland, creating a sense of cultural displacement and conflicted

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[74] In 1848, MacDonald's class at Highbury were the recipients of a lecture on facial hair. In a letter to Robert Troup, one of MacDonald's friends confides that the speaker had called a fellow-student's moustaches 'dashing – giving him the appearance of a military officer rather than a student of the Christian ministry' (Rennie, 1848, September 15). Despite this, Greville asserts that his father's initial decision to grow a beard was the result of 'his doctor's opinion that it would be protective' (MacDonald, 2005: 212).

identity that would have resonated with the British public – particularly those within the industrial heartlands. Moreover, MacDonald's descriptions of a morally acute yet physically and emotionally weak protagonist draws attention to the pervasive feeling that a society which cloisters masculinity within Evangelical and Romantic ideals, or which separates its male power-base from ideals of physical strength, is unprepared for the harsh necessities (and moral complexities) of the Crimean war.

MacDonald prefaced the 1854 edition of 'The Broken Swords' with the following poem:

'Of the poor bird that cannot fly
Kindly you think and mournfully;
For prisoners and for exiles all
You let the tear of pity fall;
And very true the grief should be
That mourns the bondage of the free.

The soul, she has a father land;
Binds her not many a tyrant's hand?
And the winged spirit has a home,
But can she always homeward come?
Poor souls, with all their wounds and foes,
Will you not also pity those?' (MacDonald, 1854: 633).

Within this poem, the presence of victim, tyrant and soldier mimics contemporary representations of the main agitators in the Crimean War, descriptions of whom often conflated morality and physicality. Like 'the poor bird that cannot fly', Turkey was described as the 'sick man of Europe' – an ineffective and unmanly invalid needing protection from an aggressive and tyrannical Russia (Cirakman, 2002: 164; Walton, 2009: 234). Even MacDonald, in an 1854 letter to his father, argued that 'It seems base to help the Turks instead of the Poles or Hungarians – one of whom is worth 100,000,000 of the other' (Sadler, 1994: 82). While acknowledging Turkey's right to sympathy, the poem focuses attention on a single body engaged in conflict on Turkey's behalf, sustaining physical and spiritual wounds

for a morally questionable cause. This individualism of focus echoed that of media representations, which increasingly depicted individual soldiers as the self-sacrificing and heroically valiant victims of 'monumental incompetence' (Streets, 2004: 23). However, when 'The Broken Swords' was republished in the 1864 *Adela Cathcart,* this contextualising poem was removed. Drawing attention away from the specific dilemma of military masculinity and its political context, 'The Broken Swords' yet retained the structure of a 'Christian tragedy', leading the protagonist back to his 'Father' in the fulfilment of his manly social responsibilities.

'The Broken Swords' is the story of this nameless protagonist as he moves from a position of effeminate uncertainty to one of masculine strength – a change that parallels his developing recognition of social duty within the martial, work and domestic environments. When he leaves home for a commission in the army, the young man is presented as a diminutive, physically dependent and sheltered 'pet', whose 'conscience, tender and not strong' transfers 'slowness of determination into irresolution' (MacDonald, 1854: 634). This prompts the narrator to argue that the conjugation of delicate nature and martial livelihood contains 'elements of strife sufficient to reduce that fair kingdom' – whether body or country – 'to utter anarchy and madness' (MacDonald, 1854: 634). Commanded to lead an attack on a 'poor disabled town' the protagonist hesitates, asking 'was the war a just one?' (MacDonald, 1854: 635). Unable to answer his own question, he is haunted by a dream in which he sees 'the body of his father, with his face to the earth; […] the rough, bloody hand of a soldier twisted in the loose hair of his elder sister, and the younger fainting in the arms of a scoundrel belonging to his own regiment' (MacDonald, 1854: 636). The implications of the dream are strikingly similar to those of Tennyson's protagonist in 'Maud'. When Tennyson's narrator discovers the body of his father, he explains that 'A body was found, His who had given me life', and he continues 'O Father! O God!' (Tennyson, 1855: I:2, 3). However, while for Tennyson the agent of paternal (and patriarchal) death is the culture of Capitalism, for the protagonist of 'The Broken Swords' it is patriarchal disobedience (in the form of military rebellion against the control of officers) that results in the murder of the protagonist's father and the rape of his sisters. Together, these images predict not only the destruction of the protagonist's home, but also the regiment's rejection of specific masculine social duties – those of patriarchal obedience and domestic defence. The murder of the father therefore equates their rebellion to the symbolic rejection of all fathers (physical or spiritual),

culminating in faithlessness, disobedience and the devastation of the home. While in microcosm this dream describes the potential consequences of a failure of control within the regiment, in macrocosm MacDonald associates the destruction of domesticity (the moral heart of the homeland) with the pursuit of a morally questionable war. This association is emphasised when the protagonist reads a newspaper article on the war that exclaims 'Already crying women are to be met in the streets' (MacDonald, 1854: 635).

Faced with a situation in which two characteristics of masculinity (martial courage and moral duty) are opposed, the protagonist becomes intensely agitated. When the Colonel notices this anxiety the protagonist is discharged, his sword broken for cowardice as an example to the army. The symbolic breaking of the sword is synonymous with the fracturing of one aspect of the protagonist's masculine identity – that of martial courage. However, MacDonald asks 'how many men are there who are dependent on ignorance and a low state of the moral feeling for a courage, which a further and incomplete development of the higher nature would [...] entirely overthrow!' (MacDonald, 1854: 635). In doing so, he engages with the question that stood at the heart of mid-Victorian debates on manhood: if a moral ideal of manliness must be abandoned in wartime for the sake of martial victory, does it follow that martial success is dependent upon the recruitment of men who are physically strong and courageous, but morally weak?

This sense of a masculinity divided against itself was popularly held. William Butler disparaged the phenomenon by stating that 'The nation that will insist upon drawing a broad line of demarcation between the fighting man and the thinking man is liable to find its fighting done by fools and its thinking done by cowards' (Butler, 1899: 85). His source was John Ruskin, who in 1865 had asserted that the national labour could be divided into two areas, with 'her brave men fighting, and her cowards thinking' (Ruskin, 1904: 158). Writing in *Sesame and Lilies,* Ruskin further asserted the incapability of the nation when it came to 'discerning true cause for battle', emphasising a growing rift between the perception of martial courage and military action (Ruskin, 1871: 42). In an 1854 letter to his father, MacDonald firmly separates moral doubt from accusations of pacifism and cowardice. He writes, 'I quite agree with you that there are far worse things than any amount of war and bloodshed; but I am not politician enough to be able to apply my principles to the settling of

the question of this war' (Sadler, 1994: 82). Despite upholding the 'Liberalism of Cobden and Bright' (MacDonald, 2005: 192), MacDonald followed the lead of *The Monthly Christian Spectator* in abjuring the Peace Party, criticisms of whom were 'heavily weighted with the language of gender and accusations of effeminacy' (Walton, 2009: 234). He goes on to argue that manliness is not revealed by a willingness to act or abstain regardless of circumstance, asserting that 'most external manifestations of manhood are dependent on a right condition of heart' (Sadler, 1994: 82). Here, MacDonald explicitly conflates physical manliness with the performance of a social masculinity characterised by moral behaviour.

In a physical expression of his fractured masculine image, the ensign's weak, pale body in 'The Broken Swords' is contrasted with that of a 'great, broad-shouldered lieutenant' whose 'firm-set lips [...] showed a concentrated resolution' (MacDonald, 1854: 636). However, while it is the protagonist's sword that is broken, the other soldiers also lack the 'right condition of heart' for MacDonald's dual construction of masculinity. Possessed of muscular strength and courage, they are yet willing to attack an unprepared and defenceless opponent (MacDonald, 1854: 636).[75] While we are never told that their swords are broken, the protagonist later hears that the entire regiment died in the attack. In contrast, when the protagonist carries away the shards of his broken sword, MacDonald compares the act to the way 'the friends of a so-called traitor may bear away his mutilated body from the wheel' (MacDonald, 1854: 637). Like his sword, the protagonist's masculine self-image has been broken on the wheel of conflict between two different constructions of manliness: internal morality, and the external display of martial courage. However, his retention of the two shards offers the reader hope that the young soldier's masculine identity, like his sword, can be re-forged.

The ensign's struggles epitomise the difficulty that MacDonald and his contemporaries had in squaring the peacetime and wartime ideals of manliness, particularly during a conflict that saw vast numbers of men recruited from the lower end of the social scale previously associated with the violence of Chartism (Butler, 1899: 17). Indeed, the question of class in representations of military manliness was particularly weighted during this period. While on the one hand Walton observes attempts in the media to recast military officers as 'upstanding

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[75] The attack in question is on a 'poor defenceless town' and takes place at dawn 'without sound of trumpet or drum'.

citizens, rather than decadent dandies' (Walton, 2009: 236), reports from the front line persistently demonstrated that the ineffective aristocratic command was resulting in an unnecessarily catastrophic loss of life (Brown, 2010: 595; Butler, 1899: 29). In the next section, I shall explore the questions of class and class-based authority that underpin MacDonald's constructions of heroic manliness, demonstrating the importance of the Manchester environment to the public reception of the Crimean War as a whole, and to MacDonald's reconfiguration of manliness in particular.

Class Conflict in Manchester

When George MacDonald moved to Manchester in 1853, he entered a city culturally recognised as the urban face of the Industrial Revolution. As with the Aberdeen of his student days, the population of Manchester had changed almost beyond recognition during the first fifty years of the nineteenth century, increasing from some 75,281 inhabitants in 1801 to 303,382 inhabitants in 1851 (Nevell, 2011: 595). In *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, Friedrich Engels described the impact that such rapid growth had upon the urban infrastructure, concluding that the working people of Manchester lived, for the most part, in 'wretched, damp, filthy cottages' within streets that existed in 'the most miserable and filthy condition, laid out without the slightest reference to ventilation, with reference solely to the profit secured by the contractor' (Engels, 1999: 100). Eric Hewitt notes that basic services such as housing, sewerage and policing 'lamentably failed to keep pace' (Hewitt, 2014: 2), leading to severe problems with overcrowding, poor sanitation and crime. When MacDonald arrived in Manchester, he referred to it as a 'city of ugliness' (MacDonald, 2005: 191), hating the smoking factory chimneys and the overcrowded conditions, nor did his disgust at the consequences of rapid industrialisation decrease after he made the acquaintance of John Ruskin in 1863. His portrayal of an almost Darwinist, predatory urban environment is clearly depicted in novels such as *Robert Falconer* (1867) and *Sir Gibbie* (1879), and even in the children's story *At the Back of the North Wind* (1871).[76] In earlier narratives, too, he followed Ruskin's lead in perceiving the industrial city as being 'at war' with the natural world, something that Jeffrey Smith associates with MacDonald's appreciation for Wordsworth and the Romantics (Smith, 2012). However, this antagonism between the natural world and the

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[76] For later representations of the urban environment in MacDonald's novels, see Chapter 4: Men in the City – Victims and Reformers.

urban environment also reflected an antagonism between the commercial laws of the country and the wellbeing of its inhabitants, a situation emphasised by the uneven growth of population and wealth within Manchester.

Following Manchester's rapid expansion, it was not only infrastructure and services that had failed to grow in keeping with the population: the labour force vastly outstripped demand, since advances in industrial technology rendered many areas of traditionally low-paid employment (particularly in the weaving industry) redundant. The Luddite riots of the early nineteenth century were therefore largely symptomatic of a changing economic environment that left thousands of people starving as technological advancement cut overheads and boosted profit margins for the wealthy factory owners. In addition, the Peterloo Massacre of 1819 provoked extreme distrust between the working-class inhabitants and the holders of authority – whether parliamentary, military or workplace authority.[77] In the following years, the demand for parliamentary reform spread, with the working classes demanding a greater political voice in a country that was growing increasingly oppressive to those on the poorest incomes.

The plight of the Manchester inhabitants was brought sharply to the public (and parliamentary) conscience by the popular Manchester-based Whig politicians Richard Cobden and John Bright, and also by writers and social commentators such as Benjamin Disraeli, Elizabeth Gaskell and Friedrich Engels, with Engels in particular articulating the need for radical reform. Engels lived in Manchester between 1842 and 1844, during which time he conducted extensive research into the living conditions of the working population. In 1845, he published the German edition of *The Condition of the Working Class in England,* drawing attention to the suffering of the proletariat within an industrialised city subject to high mortality rates consequent to disease, poor sanitation and squalid living conditions (Engels, 1999). Even while successive Governmental inquiries into the state of Manchester 'centred their debates on the extent to which criminal behaviour was a consequence of drunkenness, moral turpitude or chronic poverty' (Hewitt, 2014: 2), Engels maintained that such was the consequence of an alienating Capitalist system that had turned the poorest

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[77] The Peterloo Massacre took place on 16th August 1819 at St. Peter's Field near Manchester. A large group of workers had gathered to call for parliamentary reform, yet were violently dispersed by the army. In the struggle, 600 people were injured, and eleven were killed (Hewitt, 2014: 7). The Peterloo Massacre was vividly depicted in Shelley's poem 'England, 1819'.

classes into 'little more than appendages of the factory machine' (Hewitt, 2014: 10). Engels saw that conflict between workers and employers under these circumstances was 'inevitable' (Hewitt, 2014: 4; Engels, 1999), and in 1848 he (along with Karl Marx) published *The Communist Manifesto.* At the same time, civil unrest broke out in Britain, and the Chartist Riots spread across the country.

The Chartist Movement was founded in 1836 to demand an expansion of male suffrage to the working classes, yet the movement was sharply divided between violent radicals (such as Joseph Rayner Stephens), and more peaceful activists (such as Cobden and Bright, or the orator Fergus O'Connor).[78] The peaceful arm of the Chartist Movement considered that 'the strength of the working class lay not in violent conflict but in self-improvement through education, Sunday schools and temperance' (Hewitt, 2014: 69), and it is easy to see where these sympathies tie in to what would become the Christian Socialist principles of moral advancement through education. However, while sympathetic to the social drives of the Chartist Movement, F.D. Maurice and A.J. Scott were not supporters of parliamentary reform, adhering still to the unificatory, anti-sectarian philosophies of Thomas Carlyle. A.J. Scott in particular gave regular lectures, both in London and in Manchester, covering a range of subjects from literature to socialism and the specifics of Chartism and parliamentary reform, yet he decried the 'Ballot-Box' as 'repulsive to every class of voter' (MacDonald, 2005: 193). Nevertheless, he was a supporter of Cobden and Bright, however much their policies may have inadvertently increased levels of sectarianism in Manchester. Not only did they openly defend the rights of their constituents within Parliament, but they also founded the Anti-Corn Law Association on 24th September 1838, provoking a rift between the non-conformist and Established churches on the basis that the Church of England 'came to be seen by many in the manufacturing towns as having profited from keeping the price of bread artificially high (Hewitt, 2014: 72). Partly asf a result of this, schism (in terms of both class and faith) intensified, particularly since adherence to certain doctrines came to be taken as an indication of class status and wealth. Nor did the geographical layout of Manchester help to reduce tensions, being rigidly segmented by class, yet being a city in which the extremes of rich and poor lived in close proximity (Hutchinson, 2005: 185). While both Colin Manlove and Joseph Campbell argue that Scottish fantasy is characterised by a relative lack of hierarchy, whereby monarchs interact freely with the lay population (Campbell, 1860-2:

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[78] MacDonald saw Fergus O'Connor speak at a rally in Aberdeen in 1841 (Sadler, 1994: 10).

lxviii; Manlove, 1994: 10, 15), the layout of Manchester demonstrated clearly the extent to which the persistent interaction of 'Kings' and 'Goblins' could result in social friction, even within MacDonald's novels.[79]

By the time MacDonald moved to Manchester, the political temperature had cooled markedly. The Chartist Movement had declined since the 1848 riots, and questions of reform focused more heavily on the 'peaceful' mechanisms of educational improvement. In 1853 there were just fifty-eight provincial branches of the Chartist movement remaining, with many erstwhile 'Chartists' migrating to the co-operative movements and (years later) the developing trade unions (Hewitt, 2014: 71). At this time, the official Christian Socialist Movement was also on the brink of collapse, yet plans to form the Working Men's Colleges were well in progress. When MacDonald first came to Manchester seeking work as a preacher or tutor, he was recommended by A.J. Scott as a sympathiser, with Scott reassuring his affiliates that MacDonald was 'a reader of Carlyle' who did not believe that 'the workmen are such infidels' but rather that their reputation came from their lack of 'confidence in the ministers' (MacDonald, 2005: 206). During these years, MacDonald offered his ministerial services to all denominations, preaching for Unitarians, Congregationalists and Anglicans alike. In June 1854 he attempted to break away from denominations entirely, opening his own chapel on Renshaw Street – however despite his desire to connect with the working classes in his neighbourhood, attendance and income was low, and the chapel soon closed.

It was within this environment, in October 1854, that MacDonald lived while he wrote 'The Broken Swords' – an environment that is vividly depicted in the 1893 'A Manchester Poem' as a hub of Chartism. However, an earlier version of the poem is both more brutal and more sympathetic in its depiction of the suffering factory workers. Published in his 1857 *Poems*, 'A Dream Within A Dream' follows a couple in Paradise as they dream of life in a Manchester factory. Within the 'chimneyed city', cotton-labourers are put to work by growling 'slave engines' (MacDonald, 1857: 165). The dreaming couple enter the factory

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[79] In reference to MacDonald's 1872 *The Princess and the Goblin*, in which the King resides on a mountain-top while his daughter (Princess Irene) mingles with the mining population on the mountain-side. Meanwhile, goblins live within the mountain – forced there by their unwillingness to abide by the rules of the kingdom, or to pay the 'unfair' taxes forced on them. Under the ground, they plot revenge on the King's family, precipitating a war that destroys the goblin population.

'amid the jar,

And clash, and shudder of the awful force

That, conquering force [...] as if

With an excess of power, hungry for work' (MacDonald, 1857: 165).

MacDonald's use of language – 'the jar', 'the clash', 'awful force', 'excess of power' – suggests disquiet over the rapid technological advances within the factory labour market, and recalls the observation by Friedrich Engels that labourers were being treated as mere appendages to factory machinery. His vehemence is unsurprising. In 1856, MacDonald devoted much time to preaching in the Manchester and Bolton area, and his congregation frequently included cotton-labourers with 'Chartist passions still surging in their bosoms and the Peterloo massacre keeping alive their indignation against mill owners' (MacDonald, 2005: 252). MacDonald's familiarity with his subject is evident in 'A Dream within a Dream' when the protagonists (represented as a working class husband and wife) adapt their 'differing strength' to work. With imagery reminiscent of Mary Shelley's 1818 *Frankenstein*, MacDonald echoes the merciless force of the machines by depicting the man's body as a composite of 'wheels, /And cranks, and belts, and levers, pinions, screws -' showing industrial machinery and flesh as 'One body all, pervaded still with life' (MacDonald, 1857: 165). Just as a shattered sword symbolises a young soldier's fractured masculine identity in 'The Broken Swords', so is the cotton-labourer's body a reflection of the machines of his trade. However, by internalising the machine's relentless activity and demand for power, MacDonald also captures the anger and political unrest of the Chartist movement.

In 'A Dream within a Dream', the threat of this anger is muted in tragedy as the man and woman die, choking on the cotton dust that floats from the looms in a 'heaving tide of death' (MacDonald, 1857: 165). The scene is sharply reminiscent of the death of Bessy Higgins in Elizabeth Gaskell's 1855 *North and South* – a novel that, like the 1848 *Mary Barton*, portrayed the horrors of the Manchester environment through the bodies and experiences of the labouring poor. While there is little evidence of correspondence between the MacDonald and Gaskell families, it is inconceivable that they were not well acquainted with one another. Both William and Elizabeth Gaskell were noted writers and campaigners for social reform who were resident in Manchester during MacDonald's time in the city, and William Gaskell's

interest in educational reform in particular would have drawn MacDonald's attention. They had several friends in common (including Charles Kingsley and John Ruskin), while in later years, William Gaskell also became a regular lecturer at the Manchester branch of the Working Men's College, and gave classes in Logic and English Literature at Owens College, Manchester during A.J. Scott's final illness (Pollard, 1965: 15). However, while Elizabeth Gaskell's industrial novels became famous for decrying Capitalist hypocrisy, MacDonald's treatment of the same issues is moderate, his focus heavily inspired by the Christian Socialists. Indeed, when the story of 'A Dream within a Dream' reappears in the later 'A Manchester Poem', MacDonald's argument is more hesitant in its sympathy towards the suffering labourers, advocating individual spiritual salvation through peaceful submission rather than the potentially self-destructive risk of rebellion.

In 'A Manchester Poem', the behaviour of the man and woman is sharply distinguished from the other factory workers. At once more vibrant and more threatening than 'A Dream within a Dream', 'A Manchester Poem' further blurs the boundaries between machines and workers, describing both alike as straining against the 'iron bands and blocks of stone / That prison them to their task' (MacDonald, 1911c: 422). Despite expressing vague admiration for the 'grandeur' and 'peaceful disposition' of the Chartists in 1841 (Sadler, 1994: 10), in 'A Manchester Poem' MacDonald moves beyond characterising workers as 'a conquering force [...] with an excess of power' (MacDonald, 1857: 165). Instead, he raises concerns that the fetters of factory work 'will strain and quiver / Until the city tremble' (MacDonald, 1911c: 422). The scene is reminiscent of the rebellion of amoral, animalistic soldiers in 'The Broken Swords', who are killed in battle when they break out of the control of their commanders. In 'A Manchester Poem', the rebelling factory workers threaten to destroy both themselves and their city in the struggle for social reform.

MacDonald's letters to his father from Manchester demonstrate his suspicion (commonly held) that the moral basis of the Crimean War was deeply ambiguous, leaving him (unlike Tennyson) unable to judge the right course of action for the conflict (Sadler, 1994: 82). In 'The Broken Swords', this moral ambiguity allows him to express the masculine body as a stage of development between the animal (lacking morality) and the effeminate (lacking strength) – qualities that mimic contemporary depictions of Chartist recruits and 'dandified'

officers (Walton, 2009: 236). We are left in no doubt regarding the worse of the two offences. The protagonist's decision to keep the two shards of his sword confirms that masculine strength can develop in time, while the moral lack demonstrated by the other soldiers (as evidenced by their rebellion and eventual death) is irreparable. However, consideration of the Manchester environment allows us to perceive the relationship between manly development and hierarchical obedience within a political context. The class-politics underlying the construction of the body in 'A Dream within A Dream' and the actions of soldiers in 'The Broken Swords' echo a number of the social principles articulated by Alexander John Scott in his *Discourses* (1866). While MacDonald had seen Scott lecture many times while at Highbury (1848-1850), they did not become intimate friends until MacDonald moved to Manchester in 1853 (Raeper, 1988: 67). At this time, MacDonald was still reeling from his failure as a Congregationalist minister in Arundel, from which position he resigned after being accused of unorthodoxy. On his move to Manchester, MacDonald could not help being profoundly influenced by Scott, who had himself had his licence to preach revoked under a charge of heresy in 1831 (Newell, 1983: 278).

Scott was one of the founding members of the Christian Socialist movement, alongside contemporaries such as Frederick Denison Maurice, Thomas Erskine and John Ludlow. Like his better-known friends, Scott advocated a vision of social reform that was inherently conservative, relying on obedience and acquiescence to maintain social harmony. In his series of 1841 sermons on contemporary social systems, Scott associated political dissatisfaction – whether expressed through the Reform Bill, the ballot box or rebellion – with a materialist concern of the body over the spirit, and expressed fear that the politics of democracy would promote schism rather than social unity (Scott, 1866: ix). Scott's rejection of systemic reform in favour of individual spiritual rehabilitation echoes Maurice's distaste for social systems, which he describes as hindrances to 'the investigation of truth' (Vidler, 1966: 22). These principles were perpetuated by both MacDonald and Octavia Hill, whose first meeting in 1859 developed into a life-long friendship supported by mutual respect and compatible social ideals (Darley, 2010: 51). However, MacDonald's passionate assertion that no good can be 'effected save through individual contact' (MacDonald, 1868b: III, 177) implicitly puts the impetus to change on the individual rather than society, and assumes the culpability of the individual in social conflict. According to Scott, the influence of individual spiritual re-education would enable harmony to exist between the different parts of the social body, so

that individuals would be able to 'look upon the body of man as one,' despite 'how strangely multifarious are the portions of which it is composed' (Scott, 1866: 270). However, he warns that without such learned unity, the social body becomes self-destructive (Scott, 1866: 271). In 'A Manchester Poem', the other workers fail to emulate the acquiescence of the idealised couple, who accept the harsh conditions of their 'right function' rather than risk rebellion. As such, the threat to the city is portrayed as a consequence of their failure, rather than a consequence of the social system that produced such unsafe and exhausting working conditions.

Scott's description of rebellion as a 'poison' acting on the social body is supported in 'The Broken Swords', as well as in 'A Manchester Poem' and 'A Dream within a Dream'. The collaborating themes of domestic defence and social unification create a parallel between images of bestial soldiers (disobeying their commanders) and monstrous, machine-bodied Chartists. Likewise, both military officers and mill-owners become failed representatives of a social hierarchy. In each case, the rejection of authority results in a conflict that has the potential to spread beyond the immediate disturbance. Before the soldiers are killed in 'The Broken Swords', they commit atrocities that cause a surviving officer to weep, recognising the justification for the ensign's earlier emotional collapse and declaring that the so-called coward is 'nobler than I' (MacDonald, 1854: 646). Likewise, the rebelling workers of 'A Manchester Poem' threaten to destroy the entire city in their struggle for power. Like Charles Kingsley in *Alton Locke* (1850), who wrote that 'the only defence against want is self-restraint; the only defence against slavery, obedience to rule' (Kingsley, 1856: viii), MacDonald demonstrates that resolution can only be reached by individuals who are neither masters nor monsters – by factory workers who are willing to walk 'with bended neck / Submissive to the rain' (MacDonald, 1911c: 422), and by officers who refuse immoral conflict, yet re-enlist as anonymous recruits when conflict becomes justifiable.

Charles Gordon's letters from the siege of Sebastopol show that the fears of regimental disobedience articulated in 'The Broken Swords' were justified. Embarking on his military career at the start of the Crimean war, Gordon witnessed first-hand the 'terrible list of

stupidity and incompetence' of the British military command (Butler, 1899: 29).[80] Butler, combining political hindsight with the vivid account of Gordon's letters, describes 'the absence of proper system' which resulted in last-minute changes to strategy and friction between rival authorities at the base (Butler, 1899: 28). While both Butler and MacDonald use the setting of the Crimean war to describe a boy's development towards adulthood, failures in governance and supply meant that a significant portion of the army died of starvation and exposure on the plateau above Sebastopol (Butler, 1899: 29). Gordon's dismay at the resulting breakdown of morale and discipline amongst the recruits is clear when he describes an incident in which two sentries accidently opened fire on their own side: 'The sentries with me retired in a rare state of mind, and my working-party bolted, and were stopped with great difficulty' (Butler, 1899: 28). Of the sentries who had opened fire, Gordon explains that they had '*fired at us*, lost their caps, and bolted to the trench' (Butler, 1899: 28).

Gordon's descriptions of poor military planning and control, together with Butler's retrospective understanding of the British military policies in Crimea, validate MacDonald's fears for the loss of military control within the army. However, it is interesting to note their assumptions that such loss of control was made possible by the low social background of the recruits. With the idealism of a writer eulogising a celebrated military hero, Butler describes the first army to sail to the Crimea as 'the most brilliant fighting force that had ever left our shore' (Butler, 1899: 17). He qualifies this by describing them as 'soldiers of a type and bearing now rarely to be seen, men of tall stature, sinewy frame, well-chiselled features, keen glance, and elastic figure, the pick and flower of a population still chiefly a rural one, before emigration and the competition of great railways in the labour-market had relegated the recruiting sergeant to lower levels in the social strata' (Butler, 1899: 17). When he relates Gordon's dismay at the increasing level of insurgence and incompetence amongst the recruits, Butler describes it as evidence of 'deterioration in the material from which the nation had now to supply the losses [...] in the splendid army which seven months earlier had left our shores' (Butler, 1899: 21). Here, Butler explicitly outlines a perceived correlation between low class-status and military disobedience that is implicitly made in 'The Broken Swords'.

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[80] In later years, General Gordon became a close personal friend of who in later years became a close friend of MacDonald (MacDonald, 2005: 530). Following Gordon's death in Khartoum (1885), MacDonald published several poems eulogising the celebrated military hero, including 'General Gordon', 'To Gordon, Leaving Khartoum', 'Song of the Saints and Angels' and 'Failure' (MacDonald, 1911a).

When MacDonald's protagonist fears the outcome of the conflict, he assumes that the external moral control of the officers will be abrogated in the heat of battle. This assertion of moral awareness on the part of the officers is interesting, since they too are complicit in the dawn attack. Moreover, Michael Brown describes a growing public awareness that the main failings of the Crimean war were the result not of military disobedience, but of the 'administrative inadequacies and incompetent aristocratic leadership' that resulted in 'an anti-aristocratic critique of military incompetence' (Brown, 2010: 595). Indeed, he notes that the lack of political and aristocratic military heroes led to the common soldiers being hailed as heroes, regardless of rank (Brown, 2010: 602). While the principle tragedies that gave rise to this phenomenon – namely the Charge of the Light and Heavy Brigades at Balaclava, together with the poor supply of the army at Sebastopol – did not occur until after 'The Broken Swords' was written, MacDonald's commemoration of the individual soldier can be seen in the poem 'Home From the Wars':

A tattered soldier, gone the glow and gloss,

With wounds half healed, and sorely trembling knee,

Homeward I come, to claim no victory-cross:

I only faced the foe, and did not flee (MacDonald, 1911b: I, 321).

His celebration of the common soldier refusing to flee the turmoil of war contrasts, not with the protagonist of 'The Broken Swords', but with his assumptions regarding the cause of regimental disobedience. By equating the external control of officers with a moral 'leash', MacDonald marks a clear distinction between the qualities expected of officers (frequently drawn from the more wealthy families able to purchase commissions) and those expected of the troops (more usually drawn from the lower or working-classes). While on one hand the officers are portrayed as soldiers who have gained status through courage and obedience (see for example the 'resolution' and 'animal life' of the Lieutenant), one of the ensign's first acts is to accept his commission as a gift from his uncle (MacDonald, 1854: 636). As such, the moral criteria for manliness are imbued with a class-dynamic, being derived specifically from

the aristocratic or middle class officers in order to maintain control over the 'monstrous' and potentially disobedient poor.

Patricia Ingham notes that the languages of class and rank were uneasy allies within Christian-focused works, underpinning the rhetoric of class-obedience with 'an inappropriately individualistic perspective' that required 'the individual worker to submit to God's will when times were hard and the individual master to behave charitably to those he had dealings with' (Ingham, 1996: 9). In the sermon 'God's Family' (published in *The Hope of the Gospel*, 1892), MacDonald demonstrates that his attitude remained remarkably stable throughout his lifetime. Taking as his text Matthew 5:9 ('Blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the children of God'), MacDonald proceeds to argue that those who advocate peace over schism are 'the lights of the world, the lovers of men, the fellow-workers with God', claiming that without their promotion of social stability 'the world would have no history; it would vanish, a cloud of windborne dust' (MacDonald, 1892: 133; 134). Moreover, he claims that they uphold domesticity as a religious as well as national ideal, setting 'the Father on the throne of the Family' (MacDonald, 1892: 134). By contrast, those who promote division – whether 'the party-liars of politics', the promoters of religious sectarianism or the 'babbling liars of the social circle' – are portrayed as the 'undoers of peace' and 'the disuniters of souls', dissolving 'human families' by adopting 'the devil their father' (MacDonald, 1892: 134; 133). As such, throughout his oeuvre MacDonald's protagonists offer passive resistance against the destructive actions of rebels, and form a line of defence between social order and disorder – between encroaching 'foreign' values, and a vision of homeland morality that implicitly empowered the middle classes.

The obedience of the working couple in 'A Dream within a Dream' and 'A Manchester Poem' demonstrates a drive to quiescence, upholding social obedience as the natural behaviour of those whose natural locus is 'heaven'. Indeed, throughout MacDonald's oeuvre, we see examples of heroic characters who preach similar values from what appears to be a comparable social perspective, yet who are later revealed to belong to a social or spiritual class alien to their contemporaries. Having discussed the way in which the discourses of class inform the construction of the body, I shall now demonstrate that within a literary tradition predicated on establishing class as a moral rather than social phenomenon, social position

acts as a disguise for a 'natural' class. However, this 'natural' class is revealed both by the hero's body, and by the pacifying actions that allow him to promote peace and defend the homeland against insurgency. In 'A Manchester Poem', MacDonald's attempt to resolve class tensions through the pacification of insurgents is revealed when the bodily submission of the protagonists transforms Manchester into a spiritual testing ground 'Dearer than Eden-groves' (MacDonald, 1911c: 422). His analogy echoes the sentiments expressed in an 1856 letter to Henry Sutton (then deeply involved in social reform through temperance societies (Johnson, 1906: 40)), in which MacDonald asserts that 'our holy ideal will be perfected by much that is odious & nauseous in its immediate neighbourhood' (Sadler, 1994: 110). While he appears to suggest that hardship is beneficial to spiritual development, this message initially appears contrasted by his novels on urban reform.[81]

Following the lead of Octavia Hill, novels such as *Robert Falconer* (1868) and *The Vicar's Daughter* (1872) cite housing reform as a means to spiritual development, under the assumption that spirituality is stifled when it is denied access to beauty. Indeed, in a letter to her sister Miranda in 1865, Hill quotes MacDonald as saying that 'when we have seen the perfectly beautiful [...] it helps us to see all that is lovely in less beautiful things' (Southwood Maurice, 1928: 82). However, Naomi Wood notes that even in MacDonald's urban novels, there is a pervasive insistence that hardship suffered is spiritually beneficial, disavowing 'the reality of injustice in the material world by insisting on the justice of the ideal world' (Wood, 1993: 115). MacDonald's letter to Henry Sutton argues that the 'holy ideal' will be perfected through hardship – a 'holy ideal' that is exemplified by the bodies of submissive workers and domestic defenders, rather than in the mass population. Like Miss Clare in *The Vicar's Daughter* (an idealised middle class woman who acts as domestic guardian over a violent working-class tenement), the protagonists of 'A Manchester Poem' embody values that are described as alien to their collective. Just as Miss Clare by birth belongs to the middle classes, so do the dreaming couple belong in Heaven rather than the Manchester factory. Miss Clare's middle class values help her to reform her working-class neighbours, while the dreaming man and woman articulate apparently 'heavenly' values of submission, quiescence and obedience in the midst of a Chartist rebellion. In a similar way, the disgraced ensign of 'The Broken Swords' takes on factory work during a strike, before returning anonymously to

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[81] These novels were primarily written in Hammersmith between 1867-1875, during the time of MacDonald's closest involvement with Octavia Hill's tenement projects.

the army (MacDonald, 1854: 640). Existing in a state of disguise, these characters promulgate the social practices and values of their natural locus (whether the middle class or Heaven) yet appear to belong to the working-classes. As such, they promote unity through a seemingly disinterested obedience to the social hierarchy, which is nevertheless associated with the morality of a 'superior' social state.

Within their class-disguises, the bodies of those exemplifying the 'holy ideal' act as signposts to their social and spiritual origin. In 'The Broken Swords', the physical appearance of the ensign's body alienates him from the society of both soldiers and factory workers, articulating a combined moral and social status that is incompatible with either environment. While his slight build externalises emotional fragility during military action, in the factory he finds that the 'whiteness of his hands and the tone of his voice […] suggested unfitness for labour,' yet also generate 'suspicion as to the character of one who had evidently dropped from a rank so much higher' (MacDonald, 1854: 639). By inscribing his social status on his body, MacDonald naturalises the protagonist's 'white hands', making them appear to be attributes of birth rather than class. Similarly, while his hands may develop the calluses of factory labour, the 'educated accent of his speech' remains unchanged, with the result that his perceived status remains static regardless of employment or living conditions (MacDonald, 1854: 642). Alienated from his regiment by moral delicacy, he is equally alienated from the factory by the hands and speech that denote his social position. Even after he has 'approximated in appearance to those amongst whom he laboured' MacDonald informs us that there remain signs that 'would have distinguished him to an observer' (MacDonald, 1854: 642). One of the most notable is the way in which he regards the associated ideals of femininity and domesticity, already indicated in his outrage at the dream inspired by his fears of regimental disobedience.

Soldiers in the Home

In *Hidden Hands*, Patricia Johnson quotes an 1842 report that demonstrates the importance of femininity to the Victorian national identity, stating that 'The estimation of the sex has ever been held a test of the civilization of a people' (Johnson, 2001: 73). Within this report, which uses the rhetoric of female sexuality to protest against the employment of women in the

mines, the 'estimation' of womanhood becomes the standard by which to measure moral behaviour. MacDonald's narratives demonstrate the pervasive nature of this assumption, repeatedly associating manliness with the defence of an idealised womanhood that is synonymised with domesticity.[82]

In 'The Broken Swords', the protagonist's vision of his father's murder warns of a potential breakdown in authority. However, the vision also portrays the rape of the hero's sisters, an action that articulates a wider disregard for the feminine ideal that stands at the heart of the domestic structure. Describing the importance of maintaining a sanctified femininity, in *Donal Grant* (1883) MacDonald writes that 'Every man has to be his brother's keeper; and if our western notions concerning women be true, a man is yet more bound to be his sister's keeper' (MacDonald, 1883: I, 279). This allusion to Genesis 4:9 suggests a social and spiritual imperative for a man to defend women, so long as they adhere to what he terms the 'western notions concerning women'. Throughout MacDonald's narratives, femininity is upheld as a contrast to masculinity – intangible, emotive and defenceless where masculinity is physical, action-driven and combative (McGillis, 2003: 93). The polarity is frequently articulated through references to Pygmalion, epitomising a conflict between an apparently masculine duty to defend the untouchable feminine ideal, and a man's desire to possess (and therefore destroy) her.[83] The most literal example takes place in the 1858 romance *Phantastes*, when the protagonist (Anodos) falls in love with a marble statue. Pionke describes such scenes in *Phantastes* as the development of the protagonist's interaction with works of art, acknowledging the existence of Pygmalion within a text underpinned by references to art and literature.[84] However, his description of the relationship between manliness and art is uncannily reminiscent of the relationship between manliness and femininity, with each placing the ideal woman or art-form as an object to be coveted or controlled (Pionke, 2011).

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[82] For further information on femininity and the domestic identity, see Chapter 6: Unmuscular Christianity – Obfuscating Femininity.
[83] For an investigation into the implications of Pygmalion narratives for MacDonald's female characters, see Chapter 6: Unmuscular Christianity – Obfuscating Femininity and Chapter 7: Urban Environments, Sexuality and Domestic Control.
[84] The Romantics and the German Romantics were a particularly strong influence (indeed, the story opens with a quote from Novalis, followed by one from Shelley), yet we also see a plethora of references to classic and contemporary tales.

Pionke draws an association between MacDonald's approach to art in *Phantastes* and that of John Ruskin in *Modern Painters*, describing the importance of 'art as a barometer for the spiritual health of the nation' (Pionke, 2011: 34), just as the estimation of womanhood is upheld as a sign of national and domestic stability. While Anodos tries to obey an order from the Faerie Queen to 'Touch Not!' he soon loses self control (MacDonald, 1858: 188). By touching and awakening the statue, Anodos transforms her from amorphous 'Woman' into an individual woman who runs away crying. In contrast, 'The Broken Swords' includes an inverted Pygmalion narrative, wherein the protagonist maintains self-control. Rather than idolising a marble statue, the disgraced ensign falls in love with an unconscious, plague-afflicted woman. On the brink of trying to awaken her with a kiss he discovers a letter from her soldier-lover, and realises that by kissing her (or even being present when she awakes) he would be compelling her to abandon her soldier and love him instead. Believing the non-disgraced solider to be more worthy of her, the protagonist exercises what MacDonald calls 'painful self-denial' (Sadler, 1994: 82) and leaves the manufacturing town before she regains consciousness. Unlike either Pygmalion or Anodos, the ensign proves his masculinity by refusing to 'forcibly' claim the object of his desire, and therefore leaves her in a state of idealised, immobile womanhood.

The protagonist in 'The Broken Swords' emerges from his 'spiritual trial' in the manufacturing town having proved his masculine worth. Having developed a healthy and manly body through the adoption of a rigorous work-ethic, he determines to re-enlist in the army in an attempt to regain his lost honour. This is made possible by MacDonald's decision to recast the war in a positive moral light, with the protagonist assigned to a defensive rather than offensive position. The protagonist's decision is echoed by Anodos in *Phantastes*, who seeks forgiveness for his failures by joining two brothers in the defence of another invaded country. Although the two brothers are killed, the invaders are defeated and the kingdom saved. Following the victory, Anodos is hailed (albeit unwillingly) as a hero for his part in the liberation, and develops a sense of pride that is later his downfall. In contrast, when the protagonist of 'The Broken Swords' successfully defends a young girl from rape at the hands of enemy soldiers, his triumph passes almost completely unnoticed. Ostensibly acting without thought of approbation, the nameless ensign's act of heroism is represented as the more

complete masculine victory.[85] While McGillis argues that 'the best of MacDonald's male characters are nonaggressive [...] caring, and vulnerable' (McGillis, 2003: 89), both 'The Broken Swords' and *Phantastes* demonstrate that martial success (however displaced) can act as a signifier for a developing capacity to defend the helpless, whether domestically or nationally. Anodos does not learn that 'fighting is less than noble, especially when it serves pride and self-interest' (McGillis, 2003: 88); instead, he learns that pride and self-interest inhibit the development of manliness that is otherwise demonstrated by morally justified martial success.

In 'The Broken Swords', the scene of the ensign's re-enlistment is full of contrasts to his earlier dismissal. He is clearly no longer the boy who wore military dress, yet was alienated from his regiment by a delicate appearance. Instead, he returns to find that 'his dress indicated a mode of life unsuitable as the antecedent to a soldier's,' while 'his appearance, and the necessity of recruits combined, led to his easy acceptance' (MacDonald, 1854: 645). In the comparison, MacDonald informs us that the protagonist's 'new' masculinity is an internal reality, rather than an external display. He seeks anonymity by enlisting as a soldier rather than an officer, and avoids recognition for his hard work. However, he is soon distinguished by his commander as an individual of 'reckless bravery' with 'precision in the discharge of duties bringing only commendation and no exalted honour' (MacDonald, 1854: 646). In an ironic twist, the protagonist of 'The Broken Swords' receives social distinction, as a reward for refusing to seek it.

The ensign's final victory also contrasts his earlier martial disgrace When he acts alone to defend a girl from rape at the hands of enemy soldiers, he symbolically defeats his previous nightmare of domestic devastation as a consequence of insurrection and lack of faith. Moreover, the reader is reminded of the protagonist's earlier assertion that 'the girl alone, weeping scorching tears over her degradation' could approximate his shame at the dishonourable discharge (MacDonald, 1854: 641). His ability to protect the girl therefore brings the narrative full-circle, allowing him to regain his masculine honour. In a physical confirmation of this fact, we are told that 'His stature rose, his chest dilated,' even as his

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[85] For more information on the relationship between homosocial masculine recognition and the representation of manliness, see
Chapter 3: Homosocial Interaction – the Recognition of Manliness.

actions allow the girl to escape by throwing herself off a cliff (MacDonald, 1854: 648). The portrayal of her death as a victory underscores the fact that it is not the girl herself who is the object of defence, but rather what she represents – an ideal of domesticity on which is founded the health of the nation. Emphasising the parallel between the two bodies, the protagonist is killed by the attacking soldiers, while the girl's body lies 'a broken, empty, but undesecrated temple, at the foot of the rock' (MacDonald, 1854: 648). Having fulfilled this final stage in his physical and moral growth, we witness a recursion of the scene in which his sword was broken, marking the conclusion of his developmental journey. As he dies, his spirit rises 'triumphant, free, strong, and calm, above the stormy world, which at length lay vanquished beneath him,' reinforcing the collusion of spiritual and physical muscularity within a vision of martial success (MacDonald, 1854: 648).

In 'The Broken Swords', MacDonald uses the first-failing, then triumphant martial body not only to debate the moral basis of the Crimean War, but also to debate the qualities desired of men in a time of martial conflict. Through the death of the protagonist's first regiment, MacDonald asserts that mere physical strength is insufficient – that military victory depends on the combination of physical prowess and internal moral strength, which cannot exist in combat without a moral justification. The concluding vision of muscular morality resolves contemporary fears that moral strength may be synonymous with martial inefficacy, yet simultaneously upholds a middle class construction of masculinity as the literal and metaphorical salvation of the home-land. From 'The Broken Swords' onwards MacDonald continues this theme of military masculinity, while the point of conflict shifts to position manliness against new social or domestic threats – whether social unrest, foreign invasion or the changing nature of femininity. Examples of this can be seen in texts from the 1864 novel *The Portent* (where a wound taken in battle allows the protagonist Duncan to rescue Lady Alice and her property from the predatory interests of her family) to the numerous poems celebrating General Gordon's peaceful nature following his death in Khartoum.[86] While *The Portent* continues the martial theme of 'The Broken Swords', the narrative focus is profoundly domestic. As such, Duncan's military affiliations appear softened, despite his participation with the Scots Greys at the Battle of Waterloo. In a clear demonstration of the relationship between the languages of martial and moral accomplishment, Duncan is warned

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[86] See for example the poems 'General Gordon' (MacDonald, 1911a: I, 264), 'To Gordon, leaving Khartoum (MacDonald, 1911a: I, 444), 'Song of the Saints and Angels' (MacDonald, 1911a: I, 445) and 'Failure' (MacDonald, 1911a: I, 446) in *The Poetical Works of George MacDonald* (1893).

to wear his armour 'over the conscience, and not over the body' (MacDonald, 1864b: 55). McGillis takes this as evidence that Duncan is 'less a soldier than a man of letters, less a manly man than a "female-man"', acknowledging the extent to which the conventional representation of muscular manliness found conflict with the ideological labour of many of its proponents (McGillis, 2003: 91). However, rather than describing Duncan as 'less of a manly man', I would argue that MacDonald uses Duncan to bring the ideological worker (in this case, a tutor) within the boundary of martial and masculine discourse. Crossing the divide between defending the homeland against foreign invasion, and defending a woman against abuse within a dysfunctional domestic environment, Duncan represents a point of transition in the construction of Victorian manliness – a shift in focus that is perhaps most apparent when we compare 'The Broken Swords' in *The Monthly Christian Spectator* to the same narrative in the 1864 *Adela Cathcart.*

In *Adela Cathcart,* 'The Broken Swords' becomes a fireside story told as part of an attempt to heal a young woman dying of emotional apathy.[87] It is told by the curate Ralph Armstrong, who claims that the story is based on an anecdote overheard at a dinner party – however, the narrator of *Adela Cathcart* (John Smith) believes that Ralph Armstrong has instead 'embodied the story of his own life in other more striking forms' (MacDonald, 1864: II, 261). While the text of the two versions remains broadly consistent (other than a few rephrasings and clarifications), in *Adela Cathcart* 'The Broken Swords' loses both its place in a contemporary periodical concerned with political affairs, and the poetic preface that locates the narrative to the Crimean War. Instead, by suggesting that the story is a metaphorical account of Ralph Armstrong's crisis of faith, MacDonald is able to overlay a critique of military manliness with an exploration of manliness within the Church, and later, within the domestic sphere.

Viewed alongside Ralph Armstrong's autobiographical account (communicated to the narrator prior to the story-telling), 'The Broken Swords' becomes a metaphor for the curate's own 'Christian tragedy' in which he leaves home for university, rather than for military service. While studying, he falls into debt under the influence of Moses Melchizedek, a

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[87] *Adela Cathcart* is referred to several times in this dissertation. For an investigation into the recognition of manliness in *Adela Cathcart*, see page 80.For an investigation into the nature of Adela's debilitation, see page 185.

Jewish 'devil' and money-lender (MacDonald, 1864: II, 15). Desperate to pay off his debt, Ralph enters the clergy (just as the protagonist of 'The Broken Swords' enters the factory) only to be alienated from his role by 'a feeling of hypocrisy in the knowledge that I, the dispenser of sacred things to the people, was myself the slave of a money-lending Jew' (MacDonald, 1864: II, 19). Moreover, he begins to ask whether it is 'a manly kind of work, to put on a white gown once a week, and read out of a book; and then put on a black gown, and read out of a paper you bought or wrote; all about certain old time-honoured legends which have some influence in keeping the common people on their good behaviour' (MacDonald, 1864: II, 20).

This notion of manly work, inspired in part by Carlyle's essays on masculinity in *On Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History* (1841) and *Past and Present* (1843), was of great interest to many followers of the Christian Socialist movement, whose ideological and theological labour often failed to conform to the vision of 'muscular Christianity' which they themselves advocated. Adams highlights the example of Ford Madox Brown's painting *Work* (1852-1865), in which manual labourers form a point of visual communication between the idle or disinterested rich (the couple enjoying a picnic under the tree, or the gentleman (modelled on Robert Martineau) and his daughter, riding through the streets), and the figures of Thomas Carlyle and Frederick Denison Maurice, who stand to one side watching the workmen labour (Adams, 1995: 155). Despite Brown's description of intellectual labourers as those who 'seeming to be idle, work,' a discomforting incongruity is observable between the depictions of the labourers and the ideologists. With the result of increasing the masculine stature of the ideologists, Brown's labourers are shown intermingled with women, children and animals, in the midst of a chaotic disorder that strikingly contrasts the complacent neatness of Carlyle and Maurice.

In strengthening the ideologists' claim to manliness, Brown effectively devalues the masculinity of the labourers, making it synonymous with disorder and the break-down of boundaries. In a similar way, Ruskin's address to the Working Men's Institute in Camberwell (published in *The Crown of Wild Olive*, 1866) asserts a divide between the valorisation of manual and ideological labour. He argues that 'There is rough work to be done, and rough men must do it; there is gentle work to be done, and gentlemen must do it' (Ruskin, 1904:

49). However, while upholding the equality of the labour in terms of necessity, he goes on to assert that 'when both kinds are equally well and worthily done the head's is the noble work, and the hand's the ignoble' (Ruskin, 1904: 50). While Adams describes the popular 'feminization of intellectual labour' in the media of the 1850s and 1860s, both the curate's tale in *Adela Cathcart* and the portrayals of labour by Brown and Ruskin assert the manliness of intellectual labour as a stage beyond that of manual labour (Adams, 1995: 2). When Ralph Armstrong holds out 'a brawny right arm, with muscles like that of a prize-fighter' he asks whether the clerical work he had undertaken was 'work fit for a man to whom God has given an arm like that?' (MacDonald, 1864: II, 21). However, he resolves the question by stating that his muscles 'indicate work; but if I can do real spiritual instead of corporeal work, I rise in the scale. I sacrifice my thews on the altar of my faith' (MacDonald, 1864: II, 22). He goes on to assert that a clergyman who performs real spiritual work 'has simply to be more of a man than other men; whereas if he be but a clergyman, he is less of a man than any other man who does honestly the work he has to do, whether he be a farm-labourer, shoemaker, or shopkeeper' (MacDonald, 1864: II, 23).

Ashamed of the hypocrisy of his predicament, the young Ralph Armstrong leaves the clergy to work as an accountant in London until his debts are repaid. He lives in cheap lodgings, exposed (again, like the protagonist of 'The Broken Swords') to companions 'of all births and breedings' who use 'language which disgusted me to the back-bone' (MacDonald, 1864: II, 48). However, in this environment Ralph Armstrong regains both his manliness and his faith. As he begins to understand these 'outcasts of the social order', he finds himself able to perform 'the work of the Church' by providing both charitable and spiritual assistance (MacDonald, 1864: II, 61). At last, having repaid his debts and discovered a way to render clerical work 'manly', he returns to his position as curate and marries Lizzie, a lieutenant's daughter from his erstwhile congregation. He demonstrates the conviction of his actions by stating, 'I thought well enough of the church, too, to believe that every man of any manliness in it, would say that I had done right' (MacDonald, 1864: II, 42). When he later recites 'The Broken Swords' to the reading group, his faith is rewarded by their approbation.

In this retelling of 'The Broken Swords', alleged cowardice is replaced by avarice and lack of faith, culminating in Ralph Armstrong's position as a curate indebted to a Jewish money-

lender. In an attempt to regain his masculine honour, he embraces life amongst the working classes of London. Imitating the development of work epitomised by Brown's painting, Armstrong is transformed from being a gentleman without 'manly work' to being a financial worker living amongst the labouring classes. As he rediscovers his faith, he assumes his position alongside Carlyle and Maurice, performing ideological labour to aid the spiritual development of the poor. Although Ralph Armstrong's autobiographical account has no direct military context, the martial theme continues to link the two narratives across a generational divide. Ralph Armstrong marries a lieutenant's daughter, while Adela Cathcart's father (Colonel Cathcart) periodically refers to the military in an anecdotal fashion, commending the actions of the young officer in 'The Broken Swords' (and by implication, Ralph Armstrong's actions in London) by saying 'you should not have killed him. You should have made a general of him. By heaven! he deserved it' (MacDonald, 1864: II, 260). Translating 'The Broken Swords' from a debate on the nature of manliness within a literal military environment, the context of *Adela Cathcart* uses the narrative framework of 'The Broken Swords' to recast the argument into a domestic setting, in which the battlefield is transformed into the spiritual temptations of the city environment, and in which the musculature of the protagonist becomes the spur to prompt the development of individual manliness within the context of corporeal and spiritual 'work'

In *Adela Cathcart*, we have seen the way in which MacDonald translates the literal military body into a domestic setting, maintaining its associations with a manly body defined according to moral authority within both the home and the workplace. In the second chapter, I will look at the influence of the martial body in more mundane occupations, demonstrating that at the heart of even the poorest or most materially-defined vocations, MacDonald identifies a 'sublime' (yet class-defined) male identity that is able to act as defender of the home, and maintainer of the status quo.

Chapter 2: Class and Employment – Manliness in the Workplace

The war in Crimea was a clarifying moment in the bildungsroman of mid-Victorian manliness, distilling diverse discourses of manly development into a narrative of national defence that could then be overlaid onto other areas of male homosocial interaction. One area in particular had been highlighted by the debates provoked by Tennyson's 'Maud'[88], and also by the conflicted portrayal of the working-classes and the aristocracy in media representations of the tragedies of Balaclava and Sebastopol. Years before the outbreak of the Crimean War, Carlyle had described the spreading Capitalism of the 1840s as the birth of a 'mutual hostility' between men (Carlyle, 1847: 198). Later, Tennyson would portray this 'mutual hostility' as a hidden civil war between the poorest and wealthiest classes of the United Kingdom (Tennyson, 1855: I:7, 1-8), contrasted by the open, honest hostility of Crimea. While imbuing the Soldier body with manly heroism allowed the imbalance of physical and political power to be levelled,[89] the class-fissures revealed by media portrayals of 'soldier victims' and an incompetent wealthy elite left Tennyson's thesis unchallenged – the more so as veterans from Crimea, abandoned by the government, swelled the already overcrowded industrial heartlands.[90] In 1860, years after Crimea, John Ruskin re-iterated Tennyson's argument in *Unto this Last*, a collection of lectures on the political economy. He wrote, 'in trade there cannot but be trust, and it seems also there cannot but also be injury in answer to it, what is merely fraud between enemies becomes treachery among friends: and "trader", "traditor" and "traitor" are but the same word' (Ruskin, 1907 (1860): 245). The idealised Soldier therefore remained separated from the holders of political power, particularly the tradesmen who in terms of personal wealth and power belonged to the upper-middle classes, yet whose ties to the commercial sector contradicted the values of a class-system trying to re-invent itself outside the material framework. Moreover, in the years after Crimea the image of the literal soldier had suffered, the result of reports of prostitution and widespread venereal disease that had almost incapacitated the military. This had prompted the politicians to endorse the controversial Contagious Diseases Acts, disguising the

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[88] See discussion on page 'Maud' was published 5.

[89] Particularly as these 'manly' soldiers came to be characterised as obedient adherents of a military authority paradigm that doubled for the hierarchy of social and domestic power.

[90] This situation was decried by Thomas Hughes in 1859, when he wrote *The Scouring of the White Horse; or, the Long Vacation Ramble of a London Clerk* (Hughes, 1859). Many years later, Alfred Tennyson and Rudyard Kipling also drew attention to the plight of Crimea veterans – Tennyson when he wrote 'The Charge of the Heavy Brigade' in 1882 to raise money for the veterans, and Kipling when he wrote 'The Last of the Light Brigade', criticising the politicians who had distributed that same charitable fund to other causes.

culpability of military personnel by criminalising the sexualised female body.[91] Literary representations of soldiers therefore lacked both the relevance and the power that they possessed during the 1850s, nor did they answer the specific questions of manliness, power and morality within a class-hierarchy whose financial basis was increasingly widespread, if unspoken. As a result, we see MacDonald's ideal of manliness (characterised by the Soldier body) beginning to inhabit new environments, acting to resolve the tensions of Capitalism by overlaying the qualities of ideal manliness onto figures in the economic sector – smoothing different careers away from their financial connotations and into a sublime, moralised representation of the workplace.[92] While Beynon rightly argues that '"masculinity" is composed of many masculinities' (Beynon, 2001: 1), MacDonald's literary representations of manliness unify the different forms that existed in his society, 'sublimating' them into a unificatory ideal. However, as Eve Sedgwick notes, this process required an 'aggressive pastoralization of working people', disguising the 'discontinuity' between the harsh realities of the working-class labour force, and the parochial, domestically-centred ideal of middle class employment (Sedgwick, 1993: 68; 124).

In the following pages, I shall examine the rhetoric underpinning this idealised 'core' of manliness within the workplace, and the way in which it is articulated within professions from across the class-spectrum. In the first section, I describe the need for masculine identification in the workplace as part of a discourse that attempted to superimpose a moral / spiritual hierarchy on a class system defined according to material qualities. However, the qualities of the sublime workplace help to identify two professions as the purest articulations of manly behaviour – namely the 'gentlemanly' medical and the ecclesiastical professions. Within the second section, I explore the rhetoric that presents these occupations as 'gentlemanly', in particular noting its basis in religious and paternalist discourses that borrow heavily from the martial constructions of the 1850s. In the final section, I examine the representation of these occupations when they are removed from the sublimating discourse,

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[91] For a more detailed investigation of prostitution and the Contagious Diseases Acts in relation to MacDonald's narratives, see Chapter 7: Urban Environments, Sexuality and Domestic Control.

[92] David Alderson notes that Charles Kingsley likewise attempted to sublimate the laws of trade and social economy, suggesting a divine root for consumerism where it is spiritually motivated (Alderson, 1998: 12). This is evident in texts such as *Yeast: A Problem* (1851) and *Alton Locke, Tailor and Poet: An Autobiography* (1850). Responding to criticisms of *Alton Locke* in 1851, Kingsley wrote, 'I believe that a man might be as a tailor or a costermonger, every inch of him a saint, a scholar and a gentleman [...] I believe hundreds of thousands more would be so, if their businesses were put on a Christian footing, and themselves given by education, sanitary reforms, &c., the means of developing their own latent capabilities' (Kingsley, 2011: 247).

looking at the portrayal of the associated concepts of Capitalism and atheism in the workplace, and noting the way in which these concepts are associated with the loss of manly identity as expressed through occupational incompetence, the loss of moral and domestic authority, and the perpetuation of social 'schism'.

'Gentlemen' at Work

MacDonald's Scottish novels have been described as an attempt to find a 'point of integration for his split identity as a country boy from Scotland and English city dweller' (Raeper, 1987: 305), romanticising his childhood home as an idealised spiritual and moral locus. However, as previously argued, MacDonald's portrayals of Scotland go far beyond pastoralization, acting to contrast a romanticised, paternalist ideal of society with the dystopic realities of the Capitalist environment. Like his representation of the land at the back of the North Wind *(At the Back of the North Wind,* 1871) he contrasts the reality with an idealised spiritual homeland, and finds it lacking. He claims that far from being James Hogg's 'land of veizion' and 'everlestyng dreime' (Hogg, 2004: 92: 1396), it is comparable to Dante's vision of purgatory in *The Divine Comedy*; a world in stasis, windless, filled with a sense of waiting (MacDonald, 1871b: 115). Like his homeland, the land at the back of the North Wind is only an 'everlasting dream' if one ignores the gritty discontinuities of that dream. It is this point of contrast between the ideal and the reality that allows MacDonald to explore the conflicts of his age, holding up a parochial reflection of society to delineate the unworkable tensions of the Capitalist economy. However, it is a point of irony that this very mechanism allows him to ignore the inherent conflicts of his own methods of resolution, in particular the discontinuities birthed by his idealisation of manly behaviour.

In the 1886 *What's Mine's Mine,* we see a clear example of MacDonald's tendency to contrast the idealised value-system of a paternalist 'homeland' (articulated by the concept of clan rule) to the hostile principles of the Capitalist economy. As Richard Sher argues, the death of clan rule in Scotland was largely perceived to be the result of commercial practices by Highland Chiefs, many of whom in abrogated responsibilities to their tenants by way of enforced evictions, or by selling tenanted land to unscrupulous speculators (Sher, 2005: 164). However, in *What's Mine's Mine*, the sale of clan land to a wealthy, middle class

entrepreneur is excused on the basis that without the sale, the chief would be unable to provide for his tenants. The resulting struggles of the clan chief with his speculative neighbour allow MacDonald to juxtapose two different social systems – that of Capitalism and that of Paternalism – against the background of a dystopic Clearance narrative. Standing at the heart of this social binary are two polarised patriarchs – the greedy Capitalist Mr. Palmer, and the deferential clan chief Alister Macruadh. Referencing the paternalist relationship between the Chief and the Clan, we are told that Alister Macruadh embraces 'the fatherly relation of the strong to the weak' (MacDonald, 1886: I, 66). In doing so, MacDonald sublimates the role of the man into the spiritually-significant role of the father, and presents the abrogation of clan rule as a violation of authority in the home, in the Church, and also in the workplace.

For MacDonald, as for many Victorian writers, this process of sublimation was an important aspect of representing manly identity, particularly within economic and workplace environments whose financial interests were incompatible with the transcendental idea of the 'gentleman'.[93] Echoing this process, John Ruskin claimed that finding the 'ultimate meaning' of all forms of business was essential, stating:

> It made all the difference, in asserting any principle of war, whether one assumed that a discharge of artillery would merely knead down a certain quantity of once living clay into a level line, as in a brick-field; or whether, out of every separately Christian-named portion of the ruinous heap, there went out, into the smoke and dead-fallen air of battle, some astonished condition of soul, unwillingly released (Ruskin, 1904: 13).

In *The Crown of Wild Olive* (1866), Ruskin draws a parallel between the worlds of war and industry, establishing a core set of values that represent 'good work' within each area. In a similar way, MacDonald depicts the core values of manliness within the spheres of work, war and domesticity, attributing the capacity for authority to the Father, and the overlapping capacity for social regulation to the Soldier, as epitomes of masculine success.

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[93] Sascha Auerbach describes a particular example in which male SAOs (School Administrative Officers) felt the need to anchor their profession in the moral and domestic discourses to establish themselves in the role of masculine authority (Auerbach, 2010: 67).

Whether in the armed forces, in the workplace or in the home, MacDonald's novels establish a relationship between the male body, and a social morality that overlaid key cultural and political concerns. The sometimes ambiguous muscular Christianity of MacDonald's novels signifies moral (and immoral) action, frequently articulating a political position under the guise of a spiritual sentiment. It was scarcely an uncommon strategy for those who allied themselves with the Christian Socialists, for whom the boundary between politics and religion was nearly indistinguishable (Johnson, 2011: xxiv; Hall, 1994). For authors such as Charles Kingsley and Thomas Hughes, as well as George MacDonald, the image of the muscular body carried an implicit authority that asserted a man's ability to effect change on both a social and individual (usually spiritual) level, with the result that amongst many advocates of the so-called 'muscular Christianity', physical strength became a signifier for the right to social and spiritual authority. Indeed, for the Scottish artist George Reid, physical exertion represented a catalyst for social success – a point he frequently returned to in his lamentations over George MacDonald's persistent ill health. In an 1868 letter to MacDonald's wife, Reid begged her to 'haud his hans a wee' from work, and to 'induce him to take to the open air a little more' (Reid, 1868, September 23). He went on to assure her of the 'virtue of open air exercise and its effects upon one's tone of mind and work', contrasting Carlyle's much-regretted neglect of physical exertion with Dickens's 'super-abundant flow of animal spirits' consequent to 'hours of hard exercise' (Reid, 1868, September 23). However, MacDonald's precarious health made physical exertion of any sort a risky endeavour; in terms of muscular Christianity, he was unlike his own protagonists. While in appearance he was tall and imposing – a broad-framed, bearded Scot with a deep and powerful voice – in health he was sickly, apt to fall victim to chest infections, asthma attacks and lung haemorrhages at the slightest exertion.

While narratives such as *At the Back of the North Wind* (1871) and *A Rough Shaking* (1891) describe the virtues of physical action in contrast to poetic dreaming, MacDonald was himself an ideological labourer, destined – like Carlyle and Maurice in the Ford Maddox Brown painting *Work* – to 'seem idle'. He had been a minister, yet like Ralph Armstrong in *Adela Cathcart* (1864) or Thomas Wingfold in the later *Thomas Wingfold, Curate* (1876) he found

himself in the position of having to choose between his salary and his unorthodox beliefs.[94] In the years following the rise and fall of the Oxford Movement, MacDonald's ministerial career trajectory was neither unique nor surprising. His admiration for A.J. Scott and F.D. Maurice, both charged with heresy, did not endear him to the more conventional of his parishioners at Arundel. No more did his emphatic rejection of sectarianism – 'I would rather be of no sect than a Sectarian' – or his wish that 'our Churches were liker the primitive ones' (MacDonald, 1847, January 12) endear him to an Anglican church still reeling from the loss of Newman and Manning. His subsequent vilification of 'the cloth' as a profession demonstrates his uneasiness over the collusion between a spiritual and salaried occupation, in an era which perceived the Church to be one of the few avenues of respectable, 'gentlemanly' employment open to young men from the lower middle classes. While MacDonald himself accepted relative poverty as a consequence of his resignation at Arundel, characters such as Ralph Armstrong *(Adela Cathcart)* and Thomas Wingfold (*Thomas Wingfold, Curate*) indicate his fear that few others would do so.[95]

Narratives of spiritual doubt within the clergy are commonplace in MacDonald's oeuvre, highlighting the perceived hypocrisy of preaching for the sake of financial remuneration. While both Ralph Armstrong and Thomas Wingfold eventually recover their faith and embrace their curacies, their spiritual doubt is heralded by a monetary conflict of interest. Ralph Armstrong's position of financial debt to a Jewish money-lender leads him to conclude that the Church is not 'work fit' for a man if that man is only able to preach, and not to make his life an example (MacDonald, 1864a: II, 21). His situation as a young man undertaking clerical employment in order to secure a living, was a familiar one in an era that saw a rapid increase in the number of university graduates competing for ecclesiastical positions with low stipends (Ditchfield, 1998: 43). Indeed, as Raeper comments it is likely that MacDonald's experiences at Highbury and afterwards provide the inspiration for the difficulties of both Thomas Wingfold and Ralph Armstrong (Raeper, 1988: 61). In 1847, acknowledging his father's desire for him to enter the Church, MacDonald protested that his heart is 'far from

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[94] MacDonald was rejected by his congregation at Arundel on grounds of unorthodoxy, prior to which they reduced his annual stipend from £150 to £115. While he held on to his position for almost 11 more months, he eventually decided to move to Manchester without his family, in the hopes of gaining sufficient work to support them (Raeper, 1988: 93).

[95] The spiritual dilemma occasioned by MacDonald's relative poverty and his choice of profession is made explicit in letters to his father after leaving Highbury. Considering the progression of his ministerial career, MacDonald noted his suspicion that he would be more likely to secure a successful career in London – yet he asked, 'is not ambition a terrible thing for a motive to the ministry?' (Sadler, 1994: 19).

the feelings it ought to possess' (MacDonald, 1847, January 12). Nevertheless, by 1849 MacDonald found himself struggling to write sermons without either inspiration or experience. His self-doubt is revealed in a letter to his father, in which he confesses, 'I have not so much confidence in my capabilities as perhaps you have,' and admits to being 'very doubtful how I shall ever be able to write more than one sermon a week' (Sadler, 1994: 30). Faced with a similar situation, Thomas Wingfold chooses to plagiarise his uncle's sermons rather than preach his own. When called to account by the fatherly Mr. Polwarth, Wingfold admits to being insecure in his own faith and laments the fact that he was 'brought up to the Church' without fully understanding the responsibilities incumbent on the profession (MacDonald, 1876a: I, 139). The ongoing narrative focuses on Wingfold's attempt to discover his faith under the guidance of Mr. Polwarth, in order to justify his employment as curate.

Thomas Wingfold's situation mirrors that of MacDonald's younger self as he fluctuated between chemistry, medicine, teaching and the Church (MacDonald, 2005: 55; Raeper, 1988: 43; 54; Saintsbury, 1987: 40). Confiding his early doubts to his father, MacDonald wrote 'You do not know much of the churches in England; and I do not know much, but what I do know tends to chill my heart' (MacDonald, 1847, January 12). He goes on to admit, 'If God would help me, I think I should devote myself to his service, but I fear myself I also dislike the thought of being again burdensome to my friends' (MacDonald, 1847, January 12). His anxiety over the rising cost of his education is later justified when he outlines his expenses to his father, exclaiming 'You cannot know living at home, how money is needed, and though I confess not to have been so careful many times as I ought, I have confessed, yet I would not like you to be the judge of the amount of money required *on every occasion*' (Sadler, 1994: 31). These letters remind us that financial considerations increasingly underpinned considerations of education and occupation for those on the tenuous bottom rung of the middle class strata, making the non-commercial ideal of middle class manliness a goal beyond the reach of many in low-paid clerical employment (Auerbach, 2010: 66).

John Tosh notes that the professions of medicine, law and the Church in particular were 'often taken to confer gentlemanly status [...] partly because giving advice or service for a fee carried little of the commercial taint attached to buying and selling in the market-place'

(Tosh, 1995: 11). He goes on to state that the perception of certain professions as non-manual and dissociated from financial concerns was fundamental to their characterisation as 'gentlemanly occupations' (Tosh, 1995: 13). Tosh marks a clear distinction between the popular representation of such professions and the commercial reality of their practice – a distinction that MacDonald was clearly influenced by. Although inevitably aware of the materialism underpinning concepts of class and work, he yet chooses to represent 'gentlemanly' occupations such as medicine as 'entirely humanistic', placing them in 'opposition to the material and casually inclined direction of Victorian culture' (Sparks, 2009: 49). Therefore, while Ruskin, Maurice, Scott and MacDonald cite the spiritual and physical benefit of labour, it is in such a way that disguises the commercial aspect of each role.

The process is most apparent in MacDonald's *Gutta Percha Willie* (1873), a novel which focuses attention on the 'sublime' in a wide range of different occupations, yet which still prioritises the traditionally gentlemanly professions of medicine and the Church. The protagonist is William Macmichael, a doctor's son with a passion for learning and inventing. Throughout the narrative, he turns his hand to different occupations in an attempt to find the one that will bring him 'closer to people', thereby providing him with greater opportunities to help them (MacDonald, 1873: 161; 168). It is this desire that allows his family to guide him away from manual labour and towards a form of employment more suitable to his middle class upbringing. As a result, we are offered an impression of the 'gentlemanly occupation' as one that is intrinsically sublime, dedicated to service without material consideration.

When Willie declares 'I should like to be a blacksmith, grannie', the narrator comments that 'An unwise grandmother, had she wished to turn him from the notion, would have started an objection at once – probably calling it a dirty trade, or a dangerous trade, or a trade that the son of a professional man could not be allowed to follow' (MacDonald, 1873: 160). Instead, Willie's grandmother asks his reasons for choosing that profession, to which Willie replies 'I must have a hand in what Hector calls the general business of the universe, grannie [...] Because-because-people can't get on without horseshoes, and ploughs and harrows, and tires for cartwheels, and locks, and all that. It would help people very much if I were a smith' (MacDonald, 1873: 161). Her next step is to point out that being a mason would be equally

useful, and Willie immediately forgets the idea of being a blacksmith in favour of building homes and being able to 'see how comfortable the people were in them. I should come nearer to the people themselves that way with my work' (MacDonald, 1873: 161). Next, she argues that a carpenter works on the inside of a house, and therefore 'comes nearer the people that live in it', causing Willie to express a desire to follow carpentry (MacDonald, 1873: 162). In this fashion she leads him to consider both tailoring and shoemaking, on the grounds that these professions allow a man to 'come still nearer to the people themselves' (MacDonald, 1873: 162). Finally, she notes that 'there's a kind of work that goes yet nearer to the people it helps than any of those', and instructs him to consider what it might be (MacDonald, 1873: 163). Throughout this conversation, Willie's hands are covered with soot from the smithy, frustrating the association between white hands and gentlemanly status seen in earlier narratives. However, Willie's grandmother concludes her argument by telling him to 'go and wash your hands', thereby eradicating the soot-stains of the smithy from his skin (MacDonald, 1873: 163).

Willie's desire for work that 'comes nearer people' leads him to the apparently inevitable point of deciding between a career as a doctor or as a minister – careers that are represented as the purest form of the quality that originally attracted him to the professions of blacksmithing, masonry, carpentry or shoemaking. Indeed, Willie goes so far as to describe God as the 'doctor to this big world' (MacDonald, 1873: 167). Even when he recollects that Jesus 'didn't give people medicine to cure them', he is comforted by the comment that 'He was Himself the cure', and that 'medicine and advice and other good things are just the packets in which He wraps up the healing He sends' – packets that allow the mortal doctor to help the 'Great Doctor' (MacDonald, 1873: 168). As such, the medical and ecclesiastical professions become almost synonymous. Although the minister (Mr Shepherd) admits that he 'cannot write prescriptions or compound medicines' like Willie's father (the doctor), he asks 'mightn't words be mixed so as to be medicine?' (MacDonald, 1873: 170). He continues, 'though I can't give them medicine out of your papa's basket, your papa very often gives them medicine out of mine' (MacDonald, 1873: 170). This passage recalls a similar situation in *Adela Cathcart*, in which Dr Harry Armstrong is asked to help heal the heroine after standard medical intervention has failed.[96] His perception that the underlying dysfunction is

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[96] For an investigation into the recognition of manliness in *Adela Cathcart*, see page 80. For an investigation into the nature of Adela's debilitation, see page 185.

spiritual in nature leads him to offer her 'medicinal words' under the guidance of his Curate brother. Indeed, Harry Armstrong is initially recommended to the narrator as a Church-goer who is deeply committed to his brother, and this evidence of the doctor's Christianity is taken as evidence of medical ability despite Armstrong's apparent rejection of 'current medical or scientific developments' (Sparks, 2009: 49). John Smith comments, 'If he is at all equal as a doctor to what I think of his brother as a preacher, Purleybridge is a happy place to possess two such healers' (MacDonald, 1864a: I, 66).

While F. Hal Broome voices a suspicion that the careers of the Armstrong brothers represent the careers at which MacDonald himself failed, describing their victory as a 'sour grapes' attitude against those who criticised him (Broome, 1994: 7), this approach seems to ignore the inter-relationship of medical, spiritual, social and martial discourse during MacDonald's lifetime. In making a connection between the professions of medicine and preaching – between the health of the physical and spiritual bodies – MacDonald accepts the social convention of separating these professions from their commercial realities. Focusing on the careers as moral rather than social expressions, he further justifies their classification as 'gentlemanly' occupations while simultaneously offering them as evidence against the growing perception that science (and the scientific professions) were dissociated from religion. Supporting this, in *Thomas Wingfold, Curate* and *Paul Faber, Surgeon* we see how atheism within the medical profession detracts, not only from the manly status of the practitioner, but also from his professional competence and his ability to maintain a viable domestic environment.

Tabitha Sparks astutely notes that the unscientific basis of the heroine's treatment in *Adela Cathcart* appears to counter the 'dominant trend' of portraying medicine as a material and pragmatic occupation, being ready to 'dismiss the scientific, medical, and practical in favour of the literary and fantastic' (Sparks, 2009: 47). She portrays this contrast as MacDonald's answer to the 'momentum-gathering rise of science' together with its 'encroachment upon more abstract and moralistic value systems (Sparks, 2009: 47). Her point is supported by the role of the doctor in *Thomas Wingfold, Curate* and *Paul Faber, Surgeon,*[97] in which MacDonald attempts to portray the horror of a medical profession that is represented as

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[97] These two texts are part of a trilogy (unofficially known as the 'Wingfold Trilogy') comprising *Thomas Wingfold, Curate, Paul Faber, Surgeon* and *There & Back*. Paul Faber is only present in the first two texts.

inherently antithetical, and in which amoral science is given greater weight than individual wellbeing.[98] The protagonist of *Paul Faber, Surgeon* is a doctor who, by virtue of his medical training, has turned to atheism – 'undergoing the influences of the unbelief prevailing in those regions, where, on the strength of a little knowledge of the human frame, cartloads of puerile ignorance and anile vulgarity, not to mention obscenity, are uttered in the name of truth' (MacDonald, 1876a: I, 251). Despite Faber's 'poetic nature', MacDonald tells us that under the 'degrading influence' of 'low regards', 'corrupt knowledge' and 'scoffing materialism' in the medical profession, Faber had – against his own inclination – 'come to look upon humanity and life with a less reverent regard' (MacDonald, 1879b: I, 49). Indeed, although Faber (like Willie) entered the medical profession in 'the spirit of help', we are told that he had 'found much dirt about the door of it, and had not been able to cross the threshold without some cleaving to his garments' (MacDonald, 1879b: I, 49). This vision of the medical profession contrasts its sublime representation in both *Adela Cathcart* and *Gutta Percha Willie*, portraying medicine as a horrific discipline that regards 'man as a body and not an embodiment' (MacDonald, 1879b: I, 50). Doctors following such a profession, according to MacDonald, are likely to have 'joined in any jest over suffering, not to say betted on the chances of a man who lay panting under the terrors of an impending operation,' and he asks 'Can one be capable of such things, and not have sunk deep indeed in the putrid pit of decomposing humanity?' (MacDonald, 1879b: I, 50).

This dual perception of medicine – as spiritual cure and amoral science – is remarkable for its similarity to MacDonald's earlier depiction of the soldier as moral crusader and violent animal; nor was MacDonald alone in making this association. Indeed, Brown argues that the two re-inventions of manly identity had a common origin, stating that 'it was the military paradigm, rather than the ecclesiastical, that came to dominate reformist cultures of medical self-representation' (Brown, 2010: 598). While the influence of religious discourse on constructions of military manliness is evident in the work of Charles Kingsley and John Ruskin, Brown notes that denominational conflicts undermined the usefulness of clerical life as a moral template (Brown, 2010: 598).[99]

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[98] *Paul Faber, Surgeon* is referenced a number of times in this dissertation. For an investigation into the novel as regards domestic violence, sexuality and vivisection, see page 208.

[99] For information on MacDonald's representation of sectarianism (especially as it reflects on masculinity) see page 52.

In *Adela Cathcart,* MacDonald's representation of the spiritually-sublime medical profession is heavily influenced by martial rhetoric, with Harry Armstrong's professional heroism being lauded by Adela's father Colonel Cathcart. On two separate occasions, the doctor demonstrates that his profession is about more than his fee when his risks his life in the service of his patients, leading one character to comment, 'that doctor of yours is a hero. He ought to have been bred a soldier' (MacDonald, 1864a: III, 276). However, while the Colonel later compares Harry's valour to the performance of a military duty, he asserts that Harry is 'better employed' as a doctor, leading the narrator to believe that he admires the doctor's manliness despite its lack of military context (MacDonald, 1864a: III, 276). Manliness is therefore the common core of MacDonald's heroic soldier and doctor, yet despite Brown's arguments, MacDonald's religious affiliations make it inevitable that ecclesiastical notions of manliness should have equal significance. Indeed, MacDonald's social view was profoundly theological, with the manliness of each character being upheld by a combination of faith and subservience. While medical treatises frequently styled the medical man as a hero combating 'armies' of urban disease (Brown, 2010: 597), without religion MacDonald's heroes are lacking, unable to distinguish between human individuals and 'living clay', or to reliably negotiate the boundary between animal and defender.

In *Paul Faber, Surgeon,* the protagonist is described as fortunate to have 'escaped the worst' of the dehumanising influences of the medical profession (MacDonald, 1879b: I, 49). However, his atheism has a significant impact on both his career, and on his representation as a man. While respected in his neighbourhood for 'uprightness, benevolence, and skill', MacDonald describes Faber as more of a boy than a man since, in the absence of 'a fast belief in an unselfish, loving, self-devoting God', his incentive for benevolence is 'not the approbation merely, but the admiration of his own consciousness' (MacDonald, 1879b: I, 51). MacDonald goes on to say that Faber's consequent ambition for self-admiration 'crippled his walk, and obstructed his higher development' (MacDonald, 1879b: I, 52). The apparently physical impairment of his atheism results in his portrayal as a less competent doctor (and later husband). His refusal to express a religious belief to his patients results in 'a cold, hard, business-like manner' which, in the prequel (*Thomas Wingfold, Curate*) prevents the heroine from trusting him with the true nature of her brother's illness (MacDonald, 1876a: I, 252). While MacDonald initially suggests that Faber is redeemed by his devotion to the feminine and domestic ideals of wife and mother, he explains that such reverence only has the capacity

to redeem men, whereas only reverence for God can save both men and women (MacDonald, 1879b: I, 50). Lacking religion, Faber likewise lacks the capacity to act as either spiritual guide or moral judge over his wife's actions, and so forfeits his own domestic authority. [100] After Faber convinces his wife to abandon her own faltering religion, she is left without comfort in the knowledge of her own youthful sexual indiscretions, and under the influence of Faber's 'reverence for womanhood', she is eventually driven insane.

Faber's failures as both doctor and husband are therefore described as a direct consequence of his atheism – the same atheism that corrupts his walk and his representation as a man. The correlation between masculine success in the medical profession and religious faith is further explained in *Gutta Percha Willie* when Mr. Shepherd (the minister) praises the healthy doctor who seldom requires 'his own medicines', but is made fit to dispense them by regularly partaking of a medicinal faith (MacDonald, 1873: 174). This point is emphasised in relation to both the medical and ecclesiastical professions when Willie describes the sermons of a faithless minister as empty words that are 'like medicines that had lain in his drawers or stood in his bottles till the good was all out of them' (MacDonald, 1873: 174).[101] When Willie ventures to suggest that the faithless doctor's 'medicines might be good', the minister corrects him, saying that they are 'Not by any means so likely to be' (MacDonald, 1873: 174). As such, when the atheistic Paul Faber attempts to make diagnoses and dispense medicines, many of his cures go awry. He is unable to treat Helen Lingurd's brother since, lacking faith, he is unable to offer a spiritual cure for Leopold's guilt-inspired 'brain fever' (MacDonald, 1876a: II, 30). Similarly, when he attempts to cure his future wife Juliet of a mysterious ailment through phlebotomy, he fails to such an extent that he resorts to forcing his own blood into her veins – a graphic metaphorical rape that later compels her to marry him. When Mr. Shepherd notes the greater tendency of the sick man to lose faith, he asserts that successful medical practitioners should be both able and willing to mix religious with conventional medicine, thereby ensuring that even those who find religion unpalatable will be physically and spiritually healed (MacDonald, 1873: 174). Underscoring the importance of Willie's eventual choice of career, Mr. Shepherd explains that spiritual medicine is 'the very

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[100] For an examination of Juliet Faber's moral dilemma, together with the methods used to *cure* her, see page 224.
[101] This is a close echo of *Adela Cathcart*, in which the narrator comments that 'the medical profession has plenty of men in it who live on humanity, like the very diseases they attempt to cure. And plenty of the clergy find the Church a tolerably profitable investment' (MacDonald, 1864: I, 29).

closest way of helping men' since it will make men 'good when they are bad' (MacDonald, 1873: 172), even if it fails to make them healthy when they are sick.

Manual Labour and Divine Service

In the previous section, I approached medicine and the Church as 'manly' or 'gentlemanly' occupations that are shown to be separable from financial considerations. Next, I shall unpick MacDonald's attempt to justify the classification of certain occupations as 'gentlemanly', and his attempt to overlay other occupations with the same apparent criteria. This leads us to consider work as a divine service, whereby each man labours for the sake of his allotted social position rather than for material gain. In *Gutta Percha Willie*, the protagonist's anxiety over choosing a career reveals the complex hierarchy of both class and spirituality that overlays the concept of manly work in MacDonald's novels. While the professions of doctor and minister are prioritised, at root all careers are shown to have a religious aspect when separated from financial and material considerations (and thereby rendered 'gentlemanly'). In both *The History of Gutta Percha Willie* and *Alec Forbes of Howglen* blacksmiths are compared to ministers, 'for ever fighting with fire and stiff-necked metal' (MacDonald, 1865b: I, 183) – an association of physical strength, health and willpower that is yet not sufficient for Willie's family to accept his apprenticeship within a manual profession. Similarly, in *Sir Gibbie* and *Donal Grant* idealised cobblers work to repair 'soles' while in *David Elginbrod* and *The Portent* lowly tutors teach faith alongside trigonometry.

The antagonism between these sublimated forms of labour and materiality (whether in the form of profit or salary) is outlined in *Malcolm* (1875) when the protagonist asks, 'What wad this life be worth gien a' was to be peyed for?' (MacDonald, 1875b: I, 215). In doing so, he criticises the concept of salaried labour by placing it in opposition to a divine ideal of 'service', echoing the position of Thomas Carlyle in *Past and Present*. Mauricio Aguilera argues that Carlyle's regression to a feudalist 'golden age' allows him to 'overthrow of the social order of Capitalism, based merely on the "cash-payment nexus" between employer and employee' (Aguilera, 1999: 20), a situation summarised by the despairing question, 'Is there no value, then, in human things, but what can write itself down in the cash-ledger?' (Carlyle, 1894: 128). Likewise, when the Marquis asks who pays Malcolm to teach in the village

school in *Malcolm*, the protagonist appears surprised at the concept and asks, 'Wha wad pay me for that?' before commenting that to be offered payment from the Schoolmaster (his friend and mentor) would be 'an affront' (MacDonald, 1875b: I, 156). To both Lady Florimel and the Marquis, Malcolm's objections to payment situate him as an anomaly amongst the members of his own class. This in turn provides the reader with a hint that Malcolm was not born to the same class as his contemporaries. However, this hint is offset by the highland morality of Malcolm's grandfather Duncan, who teaches the necessity of both work ethic and obedience to the social hierarchy within a patriarchal framework.

The concept of salary is an interesting one in MacDonald's narratives, contrasting and at the same time supporting Ruskin's arguments in *The Crown of Wild Olive* (1866). While Ruskin asserted the necessity of paying a fair and regular wage, he acknowledged that 'It is physically impossible for a well-educated, intellectual, or brave man to make money the chief object of his thoughts' (Ruskin, 1904: 41). He contrasts the payment of soldiers, doctors and clergymen, saying that with these as with 'all other brave and rightly-trained men; their work is first, their fee second' (Ruskin, 1904: 42). However, in *Malcolm* the protagonist's aversion to the concept of salaried service presents financial remuneration as a factor that detracts from the innate moral identity of work. When Malcolm accepts the position of henchman and skipper to the Marquis, he does so as a result of his 'natural tendency to ministration', and refuses to allow the Marquis to pay for the new clothing that the position requires (MacDonald, 1875b: II, 150; 154).

Malcolm's source of inspiration is his grandfather Duncan MacPhail, who perceives such forms of employment according to a patriarchal social ideal rather than either feudal or democratic. This is emphasised by Duncan's willingness to undertake two unsalaried occupations with the combined purpose of 'awakening' and 'enlightening' the township of Portlossie. The first of these is his position as town piper, a traditional highland post in which he is charged by the laird with literally awakening the town at the start of each working day. Duncan undertakes this role on a voluntary basis, with such pride that when the Marquis offers to make it official, he offers Duncan accommodation but does not 'venture to allude to wages more definitely' (MacDonald, 1875b: II, 149). As the Marquis suspects, the concept of receiving a salary for service is not compatible with Duncan's patriarchal vision of society,

which stems from his clan heritage. Duncan makes this point when he expresses his reluctance to permit his grandson to accept a position as servant to the Marquis. He explains that 'If aal wass here as it used to wass in ta Highlants [...] when every clansman wass son or prother or father to his chief, tat would pe tifferent; put my poy must *not* co and eat with serfants who haf nothing put teir waches to make tem love and opey your lordship' (MacDonald, 1875b: II, 147). Duncan's lament over the loss of clan-rule is echoed by MacDonald, who complains that the 'grand patriarchal ideas' that preceded feudalism had by Duncan's time 'crumbled away – not indeed into monthly, but into half-yearly wages' (MacDonald, 1875b: II, 147). Despite Duncan's initial objections, however, Malcolm accepts the position – a decision that proves ironic upon the discovery that the Marquis is indeed Malcolm's father, and that the employment is intrinsically patriarchal.

Duncan's second occupation emphasises the extent to which unsalaried labour creates a bridge between the Christian-inspired patriarchal ideal of a pre-feudal past, and the commercial reality of the mid-Victorian era. Despite his own blindness, Duncan installs himself as voluntary lamp-cleaner for the township – an occupation that MacDonald describes as a 'ministry of light' (MacDonald, 1875b: I, 169). MacDonald goes further to declare Duncan's occupation as a symbol of his faith, since 'the sightless man thus busy about light for others' demonstrates profound belief, not only in sight itself, but 'in the mysterious, and to him altogether unintelligible means by which others saw!' (MacDonald, 1875b: I, 169). By creating a parallel between Duncan's work and a religious service, MacDonald restates the perceived separation between positions conveying of spiritual authority and monetary reward. Duncan's refusal to request payment means that his substantial weekly income is dependent upon 'the custom with every housewife [...] to pay him a halfpenny a week during the winter months for cleaning her lamp' (MacDonald, 1875b: I, 172). Despite MacDonald's own experience to the contrary (as when his Arundel congregation cut the annual stipend paid in return for his clerical 'lamp cleaning' (Raeper, 1988: 91)), MacDonald portrays Duncan's practice as a commercial and social success. MacDonald asserts that Duncan 'never asked for [money]; if payment was omitted, never even hinted at it; received what was given him thankfully; and was regarded with kindness, and, indeed, respect, by all' (MacDonald, 1875b: I, 172). However, between his piping, lamp-cleaning and occasional work as a lamp-oil merchant, we are told that 'no one wondered at his getting on. Indeed no one would have been surprised to hear, long before Malcolm had

begun to earn anything, that the old man had already laid by a trifle' (MacDonald, 1875b: I, 172). The incongruity between Duncan's volunteer-principles and his purported wealth exists as an uncomfortable correlation between success in the spiritual and economic worlds – one that is reinforced by MacDonald's repeated depictions of wealthy men made poor through unwise financial speculations.[102] In *Malcolm*, the problem is smoothed over by Duncan's successful dissociation of salary and occupation, and by the religious aspect of the work he undertakes. Discussing Duncan's role as a lamp-oil merchant and lamp-cleaner for the township, MacDonald remarks that 'by faith the blind man became even a priest in the temple of Light' (MacDonald, 1875b: I, 170). Possessed of an occupation rendered gentlemanly through its spiritual significance, Duncan gains the respect of his social collective together with financial stability, and provides his grandson – the conveniently unwitting future Marquis – with an education in the financial, patriarchal and spiritual qualities expected of a class-defined manliness.

Duncan's sublimation of the social hierarchy into an idealised paternalism is a familiar theme of Christian Socialism, with allies such as Octavia Hill and John Ruskin regularly upholding the domestic structure as the means to individual and social salvation (Ruskin, 1871; Darley, 2010: 25). However, such a system was inherently reliant upon the maintenance of the social status quo, with attempts at reform focusing on a 'return to an underlying reality' that is 'recoverable through a change of heart in individuals' (Ingham, 1996: 16). Indeed, paternalism was if anything more rigid than the pre-existent class hierarchy: while social status was mutable according to economic situation, the position and authority of the father was unchanging except in the most extreme moral circumstances. According to the patriarchal principles, the social duties demanded of the higher social stratum mirrored the duties expected of a father towards his family, drawing upon the image of God as the ultimate patriarch and overlaying a socially-constructed hierarchy with a naturalised authority paradigm (Ingham, 1996: 89). As such, MacDonald's tendency to parallel different service-driven career paths with clerical labour allows him to claim a form of spiritual and patriarchal authority for those so employed, whether they be traditional 'gentlemen' - doctors, preachers and teachers – or the working-class lamp-cleaners, cobblers and blacksmiths. Imbued with 'gentlemanly status' by association with a spiritual profession, such characters assume the

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[102] See, for example, the financial ruin of Colonel Cathcart in *Adela Cathcart* (1864), of Mr. Coleman in *At the Back of the North Wind* (1871), of or of Mr. Palmer in *What's Mine's Mine* (1886).

appearance of poor labourers who are nevertheless possessed of a high level of class-defined moral awareness, and who assume the role of spiritual 'father' to their struggling 'children'.

In *Gutta Percha Willie* (1873), Hector Macallaster (the shoemaker) attempts to explain the spiritual dimension of his profession to the protagonist, saying 'What is my business, Willie? Why, to keep people out of the dirt, of course' (MacDonald, 1873: 51). He proceeds to describe his shoemaking as the performance of a pre-determined social role, saying, 'I don't understand about astronomy, because it's not my business. I'm set to keep folk's feet off the cold and wet earth, and stones and broken glass' (MacDonald, 1873: 51). Given MacDonald's close involvement with the Working Men's Colleges, this comment may at first seem surprising. However, the premise of the Working Men's College was never to equip working men with the skills necessary for social advancement, but rather to educate them in the performance of social responsibilities appropriate to their class. In *The Workman and the Franchise* (1866), F.D. Maurice justifies the establishment of the colleges on the grounds that 'no education could be good for them [working men] which did not recognise them as English citizens, and did not aim directly at the object of qualifying them to perform their duties as English citizens' (Maurice, 1866: vii). Echoing this point, Hector Macallaster describes his own role in the social order. He imagines God instructing him, saying 'There! you make shoes, while I keep the stars right', and remarks to Willie, 'Isn't it a fine thing to have a hand in the general business?' (MacDonald, 1873: 51). In doing so, Macallaster describes his social position as the result of divine will, and his own happiness as the result of his acceptance of the fact.

When Maurice published *The Workman and the Franchise* in 1866, it was partly in answer to the perceived alienation of the working classes from the body politic – an alienation grounded in fears of Chartism, and exacerbated by protracted debates on suffrage and the ballot box (Maurice, 1866: viii; Scott, 1866: ix). The book is an active defence of the founding principles of the Working Men's Colleges, which are rationalised in the context of political debate by his claim that the population (by implication excluding the working-class) needed to make 'some careful inquiry where the strength of this class lies; how it is most likely to make its voice heard, supposing its voice ought to be heard' (Maurice, 1866: viii). Addressing a primarily middle class audience, Maurice attempts to placate his readership by

advocating an education in civic responsibilities, explaining that an understanding of common humanity between classes 'should surely be the first aim of all who educate' (Maurice, 1866: x). He supports this statement with the revealing comment that the 'insanity of their monster petition' should provoke engagement rather than separation, arguing that by 'leading them to seek organization' they might in time grow to accept 'the full responsibilities of citizenship' (Maurice, 1866: 200). Maurice's assumption that the middle classes had not merely the duty, but the capacity, to educate working men in the performance of their civic duty speaks of a cultural belief that the middle classes were possessed not only of a finer quality of education, but of a superior morality and understanding of the nature of civic duty. Likewise, in *Sesame and Lilies* Ruskin's designation of true manliness as kingship associates a social position with 'a stronger moral state, and a truer thoughtful state, than that of others; enabling you, therefore, to guide, or to raise them' (Ruskin, 1871: 75). Like Maurice's purpose for founding the Working Men's Colleges, Ruskin's stated aim in publishing the letters contained in *The Crown of Wild Olive* was to encourage an alliance between individuals of different classes, resolving different interpretations of work and national duty in order to promote social engagement within a designated social hierarchy (Ruskin, 1904: 25). For both writers, the emphasis is on communicating with men of all classes, 'making our pupils understand that there is a manhood for them all into whatever class they are born' (Maurice, 1866: 189). Moreover, Maurice's designation of '*a* manhood' arising from the fulfilment of civic responsibility suggests the existence of different forms of manliness for different classes. In these texts, as in MacDonald's narratives, the criteria for working class manliness involved accepting the role of student/child in relation to the higher class teacher/father, except in instances such as the saintly David Elginbrod, where the working man belongs (by nature and moral values) to a class far higher than that of his birth.

The assertion of a moral as well as material distinction between different classes (and different versions of class-defined manliness) provides further evidence of a cultural need to redefine class according to non-material criteria – a difficult accomplishment in an era where class boundaries were established according to a vast array of minute details bearing upon property ownership, income and social presentation. Tosh notes that membership to the ranks of the lower middle classes was particularly broad and rigorously defended, being comprised of occupations which 'departed in some significant particular from the middle class ideal', whether through their being 'hired employees', through the direct handling of money, or

through the performance of physical labour (Tosh, 1995: 12). While according to this schema a shopkeeper might belong to the middle class whereas a cobbler would not, in MacDonald's narratives shopkeepers are frequently positioned in moral opposition to other, more lowly yet more spiritually significant occupations.

In *Donal Grant* (1883), the soutar Andrew Comin parodies the principles of consumerism by exclaiming, 'I'm jist a wheen tribled to ken hoo to charge for my wark. It's no barely to consider the time it'll tak me to cloot a pair, but what the weirer 's like to git oot o' them. I canna tak mair nor the job 'ill be worth to the weirer' (MacDonald, 1883: I, 44). While he admits that the greater level of work goes into repairing old and worn shoes, that is the work he charges least for, on the grounds that it is less useful to the customer. In contrast, when the shop-keeper Robert Bruce (*Alec Forbes of Howglen,* 1865) attempts to lend his profession spiritual significance, he ignores the Gospel to focus on 'Jacob's speculations in the money-market of his day and generation' under the hope that 'the God of Jacob' would 'bless the Bruces' (MacDonald, 1865b: I, 45). The material nature of Bruce's prayer is emphasised when the prayer is interrupted by 'the click of the latch of the shop-door, which brought it to a speedier close than one might have supposed even Mr. Bruce's notions of decency would have permitted' (MacDonald, 1865b: I, 45). Indeed, if a man's sphere of influence was held to be patriarchal – that is, as spiritual 'father' and as head of the domestic as well as the commercial sphere – then Robert Bruce swiftly shows himself to be 'unmanly' through both his shop-work and his contact with the financial world.

Having identified a process of 'sublimation' with respect to occupation in MacDonald's work, I have argued in the above pages that the creation of a 'gentlemanly' identity upholds a social hierarchy in which every person is required to fulfil their allotted social role. This identity is spiritual in nature, yet is thereby underpinned by a separation from commercial principles (such as profit and salary) that results in the portrayal of materially-interested individuals and professions as 'unmanly'. In this final section, I shall demonstrate the ways in which the 'unmanliness' of materialistic male characters is articulated through loss of authority and social disorder. In contrast, a willingness to submit to (and enforce) the 'divine will' – whether as regards the social or spiritual hierarchies – results in the manly man being rewarded with a domestic and spiritual authority that is reinforced by material success.

Performing the Manly Role

When Robert Bruce is first introduced to the reader in *Alec Forbes of Howglen*, MacDonald establishes his moral character with the question of his orphaned cousin's guardianship. Bruce's initial reaction is not pity for his cousin (Annie Anderson) but a question over how much money she will inherit. Convinced of her poverty, he asks Andrew Constable (a kirk elder), 'Do ye think that folk wad expec' ony thing o' me gin the warst cam to the warst?' (MacDonald, 1865b: I, 18). Realising that society might expect him to care for Annie, he falsely protests his own poverty, yet acknowledges that he 'maunna a'thegither disregaird what fowk think, 'cause there's the chop (*shop*); an' gin I ance got—no to say an ill name, but jist the wind o' no being sae considerate as I micht hae been, there's no sayin' but twa or three micht gang by my door, and cross to Jamie Mitchell's yonner' (MacDonald, 1865b: I, 18). Realising that Bruce's 'moral' position is based upon potential profit or loss, Andrew reproaches him, saying 'Do ye what's richt, Robert Bruce, and sae defy fowk and fairy' (MacDonald, 1865b: I, 18). The narrator later informs us that Andrew 'could not take much interest in the buttressing of a reputation, which he knew to be already quite undermined by widely-reported acts of petty meanness and selfishness' (MacDonald, 1865b: I, 20). This 'meanness and selfishness' is corroborated when Bruce decides to accept guardianship over Annie, on the discovery that she stands to inherit £150. Under the understanding that he will invest her money in his shop and pay for her upkeep out of the interest, he is 'rejoiced to think that he would thus satisfy any expectations that the public might have formed of him, and would enjoy besides a splendid increase of capital for his business' (MacDonald, 1865b: I, 30). While we are told that he never intended 'conscious dishonesty to Annie', he nevertheless hoped 'to keep the girl upon less than the interest would come to' and reasons that 'if anything should happen to her – seeing she was not over vigorous – the result would be worth waiting for' (MacDonald, 1865b: I, 30). As a result, Annie becomes a disempowered victim of a Capitalist economy that 'upsets traditional conceptions of patriarchal power' (Guest, 2007: 636). Left in a rat-infested room with little in the way of food or emotional support, she presents the sympathetic face of a domesticity vulnerable to the intrusion of commercialism.

Throughout the novel, the manliness of Robert Bruce is attacked according to a range of criteria, including religious faith, financial contact and physical stature. However, it is in his relationship to Annie – a fatherhood based upon consumer principles – that his full failings are revealed. When Annie is first introduced to Bruce, MacDonald confirms the shop-keeper's diminution by lamenting, 'Alas! how little a man may cast a great shadow!' (MacDonald, 1865b: I, 26). From this point, Robert Bruce's masculine authority is constantly challenged. While nominally the head of his family, his patriarchal role is frequently usurped by his materialistic and unmaternal wife. Sascha Auerbach notes that such caricatures were common to mid-Victorian society, with the masculine status of lower-working-class men being question according to their ability to control a domestic environment (Auerbach, 2010: 67). In *Alec Forbes of Howglen,* Bruce's material attitudes towards faith and morality invalidate a domestic ideal founded upon those principles, with the result that he is unable to correct or even influence his children, being 'too much afraid of their mother', who 'would have flown into the rage of a hen with chickens if even her own husband had dared to chastise one of *her* children' (MacDonald, 1865b: I, 76). The narrator confirms Robert's weakness as a patriarch with the comment that 'The shop might be more Robert's than hers, but the children were more hers than Robert's' (MacDonald, 1865b: I, 76). However, despite asserting her own authority over the domestic sphere, Mrs. Bruce is reluctant to allow her husband dominance over the shop. He admits that despite her apparent exhaustion with managing the family, he 'canna haud her oot o' the chop' since 'She's like mysel' – she wad aye be turnin' a bawbee' (MacDonald, 1865b: I, 28). Her preference for shop over family is later associated with her willingness to cheat customers by diluting milk: 'if any customer had accused her of watering it, Mrs. Bruce's best answer would have been to show how much better what she sold was than what she retained; for she put twice as much water in what she used for her own family' (MacDonald, 1865b: I, 44). Throughout the narrative, the domestic environment of the Bruce family is subordinated to the needs of the shop – a point demonstrated by MacDonald's integration of shop and home, describing the building as 'a low one, although of two stories' with the front door 'between two windows belonging to the shop' (MacDonald, 1865b: I, 37). This materialisation of the home stands in contrast to the sublimation of Hector Macallaster's idealised workplace in *Gutta Percha Willie*. Within a literary tradition predicated on the heroic man's ability to defend the sanctity of the domestic unit, Robert Bruce appears both un-fatherly and unmanly.

The relationship between work-life and home-life in the mid-Victorian period involved a curious balancing act, and Tosh notes that its representation in literature rarely bore any resemblance to the reality. Sedgwick likewise perceives the gap between literary representation and reality, arguing that the mobilisation of 'a new narrative of the "private," bourgeois family' allowed the homosocial relationships between male family members to be more rigorously defined, since whatever the reality, the rhetoric of the family was 'able to make descriptive sense of relations across class' (Sedgwick, 1993: 68). In *Sesame and Lilies*, Ruskin asserted the necessity of separating the two spheres, arguing that the home should be a 'sacred place, a vestal temple', and warns that the moment either husband or wife permit 'the anxieties of the outer life' to 'cross the threshold, it ceases to be home' (Ruskin, 1871: 92). However, such arguments were impractical for the vast majority, for whom the formulation of the domestic ideal symbolised instead a gradual shift from an economic to a sentimental concept of 'family' – specifically reflecting 'the increasing separation of work from home' (Tosh, 1995: 13). Far from the concept of 'separate spheres' being a reality, Tosh explains that 'middle class men usually conducted their business and domestic life under the same roof, with no clear division between the two' (Tosh, 1995: 14).

Despite his caricature of the Bruce residence as a home 'invaded' by the shop, even MacDonald's household reflected the blurred boundary between work-life and home-life. Not only would Louisa MacDonald regularly join her husband on lecturing tours, but she would also (along with MacDonald's eldest daughter Lilia) keep up correspondence on his behalf, whether to admirers and friends (such as John Ruskin or Charles Dodgson) or to business associates (such as Alexander Strahan). Of course, such individuals rarely remained purely business associates for long, being steadily drawn into the MacDonalds' domestic environment. Strahan's affectionate address to Louisa as 'My Dear Governor's Governor' begs her to 'raise the (North) Wind' since 'Your accusing spirit here is panting for a gust of it!' (Strahan, 1870, June 16). This playful blurring of the work/home divide shows Strahan literally begging Louisa to prompt her husband into finishing the next instalment of *At the Back of the North Wind*, which was at that time serialising in the children's magazine *Good Words for the Young*. His tone echoes that of George Reid, whose commissioned 1868 painting of George MacDonald made his name as a portrait artist. As with Strahan, Reid's professional relationship with MacDonald did not preclude the development of a deeply affectionate correspondence with his family – particularly Louisa, whose letters delighted

him despite her 'abominable tendency to tease' (Reid, 1869, April 11). In his letters to Louisa, he transforms the professional into the personal. When he praises Louisa for getting 'Mr MacDonald into something like working health' he (like Strahan) playfully acknowledges her influence over her husband's working life (Reid, 1869, October 20). The business-related affairs of artistic commissions, print sales and dress patterns are liberally interspersed with political and personal commentaries, ranging from the complex theological and political affiliations of Scottish newspapers to Lilia MacDonald's theatrical ambitions. As such, the concept that blurring work/home boundaries 'undermined the claim of these people to middle class status' appears confirmed as a purely ideological one that, if not fully upheld in MacDonald's own family life, is nevertheless used in his narratives as a literary signifier for the paucity of an individual's claim for middle class social (and moral) status (Tosh, 1995: 18). In the case of Robert Bruce, it demonstrates the erosion of personal relationships into commercial partnerships, articulating an incompatibility between Capitalism and a class hierarchy defined according to moral rather than material attributes.

In *Thomas Wingfold, Curate,* Mr. Drew (like Duncan MacPhail in *Malcolm*) outlines the method by which a man may work within the commercial sphere, yet remain within the bounds of a Christianized middle class morality. The spiritual foundation is set when Mr. Drew imagines his shop as 'the temple of the Holy Ghost, out of which I had to keep the sin' (MacDonald, 1876a: II, 83). He asks himself, 'Is thy work unholy? Are thy deeds base? Is thy buying or selling dishonest? Is it all for thyself and nothing for thy fellows? Is it not a lawful calling? Is it, or is it not, of God?' (MacDonald, 1876a: II, 84). In an attempt to answer these questions, he begins to sell his merchandise at discount to the poor, ensuring that service rather than profit becomes the focus for the business. Mr. Drew's business is therefore translated from the commercial to the personal, establishing his place of work as a sphere of moral action and personal interaction – essentially (in the absence of his absconded wife) forming a domestic environment from a business enterprise that operates under a veneer of religious ideology. As a result, his status as religious visionary overlays that of trader, dissociating his occupation from financial considerations even while it is intrinsically underpinned by commercial transactions.

The conflict between Robert Bruce's material 'class' and his 'moral' class highlights MacDonald's concern over a system that permits authority to men who are incapable of asserting authority over their own homes – particularly in instances where the domestic sanctuary is subordinated to commercial principles. Supporting this, his portrayal of 'gentlemanly' behaviour within sublimated occupations (such as those of the cobbler, the doctor, the minister or the 'holy' trader) reinforces a concept of class that is dissociated from financial contact, with spiritual significance overlaying the fundamentally material class hierarchy. MacDonald's repeated criticism of 'the Church' as profession rather than vocation throws this conflict into sharp relief, pointing out the incongruity and deceitfulness of a profession founded on spiritual principles that is yet tainted by material and commercial concerns. In narratives such as *Thomas Wingfold, Curate*, *Paul Faber, Surgeon* and *Malcolm*, MacDonald questions the right of materialistic ministers to appear as 'gentlemen' while trading in faith as openly (and as dishonestly) as a merchant trading in short weight (MacDonald, 1879b: I, 107).

The conflict between the material and spiritual representation of the Church is epitomised by the experiences of the dissenting minister Mr. Drake in *Paul Faber, Surgeon.* Like Robert Bruce, Mr. Drake's chapel-butcher embodies the conflict between consumerism and the Church (or between business-contact and personal-contact) in an increasingly capital-driven society. On discovering the chapel-butcher's tendency to give short weight, Mr. Drake withdraws his business, preferring to deal with a Church of England butcher on the grounds that 'all kinds of cheating, down to the most respectable, were abominable to him' (MacDonald, 1879b: I, 107). When the influential chapel-butcher retaliates, Mr. Drake finds his annuity reduced to one third of its previous amount. Plunged into poverty ('poverty' in this instance meaning the reduction of his household staff to a single servant) Mr. Drake realises that he is unable to pay his new butcher's bill, leading him to wonder 'which would triumph the more – the church-butcher over dissent, or the chapel-butcher over the church-butcher, and the pastor who had rebuked him for dishonesty!' (MacDonald, 1879b: I, 122). Through a scene which sees financial transactions debated in light of Christian denomination, MacDonald describes his perception of sectarianism as a unified faith dividing into conflicted, mutually-destructive markets – destroying the authority of the Church through the intrusion of material concerns. In parody, we see the tensions of sectarianism played out over a platform of moral 'economics' – underscoring the extent to which religion could be

perceived as a business in itself. Confirming this point, Mr. Drake laments that should he go to Church 'it would be to feel the eye of the butcher and not that of the curate upon him all the time' (MacDonald, 1879b: I, 110).

In the 'Thomas Wingfold' narratives (*Thomas Wingfold, Curate*; *Paul Faber, Surgeon*; *There & Back*) sectarianism is portrayed as a superficial and unnecessary distraction from true faith – one that has more to do with 'party spirit', class and financial power than religious revelation. Indeed, the 1876 novel *St George and St Michael* (rather unfairly dismissed by Raeper as a novel of the English Civil War 'in which no one is killed' (Raeper, 1988: 211)) describes a world in which politics and religion collide. Detailing the factors contributing to the war, MacDonald describes how puritans associated the 'essential identity of Episcopalian with Catholic politics', with the result that the Episcopalians became 'endangered by the extension and development of the very principles on which they had themselves broken away from the church of Rome' (MacDonald, 1876b: I, 161). When MacDonald characterises the religious and political prejudice as 'dangerous in proportion to the unreason of those who cherished it' (MacDonald, 1876b: I, 82), he creates a careful parallel between the religious tensions of the English Civil War, and the growing sectarianism (and apparently consequent lack of faith) of the mid-Victorian period.

This divided representation of faith – as a unifying spiritual 'truth' versus a divisive 'business' – epitomises a perceived disconnect between religion and spirituality that mirrors the disconnect between the material and sublime profession, or the 'truth' and 'appearance' of manliness. Raeper describes the increase in schism as a consequence of urbanisation and increasing industrialisation, generating social conflict and sectarianism 'as the traditional foundations of faith were slowly gnawed away' (Raeper, 1988: 182). These threats were widely felt, resulting in frequent artistic representations of a mythological 'golden age' untouched by either influence. Ruskin's Guild of St George echoed the paintings and stories of the Pre-Raphaelites, contrasting the schismatic Victorian era with Utopian ideals of an uncomplicated and inherently moral time that encapsulated the values of 'true Englishness'. Stephen Prickett draws attention to this conflict, commenting that the 'rapid intellectual and social changes' of the period fostered 'the idea of tradition – or, conversely, the rejection of it' (Prickett, 2013: 2). However, when MacDonald published *St George and St Michael* in

1876 he instead created a vision of historical dystopia – one in which 'Englishness' and 'The Truth' (or 'St George' and 'St Michael') represent polar extremes of political and religious thought. Although neither of the protagonists (Dorothy and Richard) are fully acquainted with the politics of the dispute, their relationship is severed by differences in family affiliation, and by their own consequent 'party spirit'. Although Dorothy sides with the Catholic-affiliated Royalists and Richard with the Puritan-affiliated Parliamentarians, Richard demands to know, 'Why should the Knights part company?' (MacDonald, 1876b: I, 16). Without attacking either 'Englishness' or 'The Truth', MacDonald portrays the insanity of a society which allows party-spirit and sectarianism to force polarity between two principles that should be inseparable. His argument echoes that of F.D. Maurice, who maintained that the Book of Common Prayer was his one defence against the 'tormenting devils' of divergent doctrines (Vidler, 1966: 23). Despite admitting sympathy with a wide range of different denominations – including the Wesleyan Methodists, the Unitarians and the Congregationalists (Hein, 1999: 94)[103] – MacDonald, like Maurice, upheld the Church of England's supremacy due to the greater strength of a unified faith. As such, his narratives repeatedly depict caricatures of dissenting groups engaged in a self-destructive conflict through their refusal to co-operate.

In *Malcolm* (1875), the socially divisive nature of sectarianism is characterised by the body of a 'sickly young student' whose sermon at a revival meeting denounces those bearing 'the signs and symbols of rank and authority' as 'dogs' attempting to force entry into the New Jerusalem (MacDonald, 1875b: III, 56; 57). While Mr. Cairns (the factor) is mocked for his fear that revival meetings threaten political authority 'in such times of insubordination as these [...] when every cadger thinks himself as good as an earl' (MacDonald, 1875b: III, 6), he is proved correct when the Marquis attempts to leave the congregation. The sickly preacher rallies the previously submissive fisher-folk against him, and violence is only prevented by the arrival of Mrs. Findlay, who 'did not approve of conventicles, being a great stickler for every authority in the country' (MacDonald, 1875b: III, 64). Despite this attack, MacDonald does not denounce conventiclers as dangerous. Instead, he parallels such forms of worship with 'the wild gestures and rude songs of miners and fishers and negroes', describing them collectively as 'children' who 'will rush and shout and hollo for the same joy

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[103] In *The Vicar's Daughter*, the narrator comments 'I would that many, who think they know better, believed in him half as much as many Unitarians do' (MacDonald, 1872: III, 221).

which sends others of the family to weep apart' (MacDonald, 1875b: II, 111; 112). Quite aside from the problematic designation of 'miners and fishers and negroes' as children, the association of revivalism with rebellion and immaturity allows MacDonald to couch his criticisms of the movement in terms of the undeveloped physical body. In his advocacy of physical mortification and political rebellion, the 'pale-faced, consumptive' preacher stands in sharp contrast to Malcolm, whose 'picturesque' manliness (MacDonald, 1875b: I, 255) and feudal obedience separates him from his working-class contemporaries. Moreover, far from offering his audience messages of religious hope and social cohesion, the preacher (whose fervour betrays 'anxiety concerning himself rather than indicating the possession of good news for others') transmits his fears to members of his congregation, who begin to suffer convulsions and hysterics even as the preacher's body weakens (MacDonald, 1875b: III, 66). The preacher's divisive policies therefore betray a lack of concern for his fellow conventiclers, demonstrating the inherent hypocrisy of his position.

In a similar situation, when a 'spirit of prophecy infiltrates the town of Glamerton in *Alec Forbes of Howglen*, it provokes an outpouring of 'rebuke and condemnation' from and against every denomination (MacDonald, 1865b: II, 182; 183). MacDonald characterises the particular prejudice of Scotland by pitting the established Presbyterian Church against Catholicism, saying 'Of course the Church of Rome had her due share of the application from all parties', yet he admits that 'neither the Church of England, the Church of Scotland, nor either of the dissenting sects, went without its portion freely dealt, each of the last finding something that applied to all the rest' (MacDonald, 1865b: II, 182). The apparent superficiality of such a position is emphasised by the comment that 'one might have thought they were revelling in the idea of the vengeance at hand, instead of striving for the rescue of their neighbours from the wrath to come' (MacDonald, 1865b: II, 183). As such, sectarianism becomes a form of 'false religion' in MacDonald's narratives – an action against the unified Church that is similar to (and frequently associated with) a self-destructive social rebellion. In the sectarian conflicts of *Paul Faber, Surgeon*, *Malcolm* and *Alec Forbes of Howglen*, we see a conflict between the appearance and reality of faith that parallels the conflict between social and spiritual class, or between social and spiritual manliness. As a result, characters, classes and denominations are shown to prioritise the commercial or political considerations of the present world over spiritual salvation in the next.

This concept of superficial or materialistic religion is most clearly captured in the use of terms such as 'the cloth' to describe ecclesiastical work. MacDonald's dislike of the term is evident throughout his narratives, to the extent Malcolm associates use of the term (even within the clergy) with a lack of respect for the spiritual profession, together with a heightened regard for its 'social claims and ecclesiastical rights' (MacDonald, 1875b: III, 3). Focusing on the cloth as the material manifestation of a spiritual vocation, use of the term becomes a reverse-sublimation; a grounding of the spiritual into the mundane that is curiously reminiscent of MacDonald's descriptions of 'fallen women' as angels with muddy wings.[104]

In *Adela Cathcart*, John Smith more literally depicts the conflict between 'the cloth' and Christianity, declaring that he had 'always found that the *clergy* absorbed the *man*; and that the *cloth*, as they called it even themselves, would be no bad epithet for the individual, as well as the class' (MacDonald, 1864a: I, 3). Just as Ralph Armstrong realises that ideological labour without faith is emasculating, so does John Smith assert the superficial, material nature of an individual who sacrifices his manliness in pursuit of a spiritual career for no purpose other than social advancement. This assertion is echoed in *There & Back*, the last book of the 'Thomas Wingfold' series, when the morally dubious Sir Wilton vows that his requests will 'require nothing unworthy of the cloth'. (MacDonald, 1891a: 564) Wingfold retaliates, 'The cloth be hanged! [...] Do they require anything unworthy of a man – or if you think the word means more – of a gentleman?' (MacDonald, 1891a: 564). In *Thomas Wingfold, Curate,* the superficial nature of most of Wingfold's parishioners leads him to question the right of both sectarians and false ministers to describe themselves as either Christian or manly.

Wingfold's position as curate allows MacDonald to include entire sermons within the novel structure, and these are used to argue that the label 'Christian' asserts a willingness to follow the rules of Christ. Despite himself being the curate of Glaston, Wingfold informs his congregation that he is unable to call himself a Christian – that he is instead a disciple, attempting to learn the ways of Christ. As a result of his willingness to strip away his own

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[104] For example, in *Paul Faber, Surgeon* the seduced Juliet Faber is described as having wings that are 'full of mud, paralyzed with disuse, and grievously singed in the smoldering fire of her secret' (MacDonald, 1879b: 272).

social veneer, Wingfold is mocked by a large portion of Glaston society – yet receives approbation from the those members of society whose opinion is portrayed as more honest than popular. Wingfold's admission of his own lack of faith, together with the confession that he has in the past plagiarised the sermons of his uncle, is commended by the draper Mr. Drew. Perceiving Wingfold's failures as analogous to his own past tendency to profiteer, Mr. Drew sets about reforming his business, determined to narrow the gap between the signifier of 'Christianity' and the reality of his own behaviour.

The conflict between appearance and reality is an immensely important one in MacDonald's novels, allowing him to criticise political and social trends by marking them as characteristics of an honest, superficial or deceptive identity. In his opposition of genuine and superficial faith (or 'the Church' and 'the cloth'), as in his opposition of socially and spiritually-defined class, MacDonald recasts Carlyle's prophet and dandy through the lens of his own social perception. In the examples above, religious dissent is portrayed as destructive to the body of Christianity, characterised by a focus on words over action, dogma over faith, or 'cloth' over substance. In contrast, the portrayal of manliness required an obedience to a paternalist social hierarchy, advocating unification rather than division, and the defence of homeland domesticity against the encroachment of divisive values, and the acceptance of an allotted social position over the material considerations that might prompt a desire for change.

From a consideration of the literal military body on the battlefield, we have seen the translation of the soldier into other areas of male social interaction. However, the connection to the military body remains through martial references and representations of conflict, portraying the soldier as the defender of the homeland, and the promoter of conservative and unifying social values. Having looked at the representation of the military body in the workplace, we see now the way in which social obedience is upheld through the portrayal of an 'sublime' image of professional manliness. For the 'gentlemanly' roles of doctor and minister, this is supported by the inter-relationship of medical, ecclesiastical and martial discourse that presents the fulfilment of social duty as a military victory. In contrast, the contamination of ideal manliness with material concerns is presented as a failure to promote quiescence, resulting in scenes of national, domestic and individual conflict that a 'true' man – a soldier – should guard against.

Chapter 3: Homosocial Interaction – the Recognition of Manliness

In the previous two chapters, we have seen the way in which an idealised template of manliness is constructed in reference to particular anxieties relating to the balance of physical and political power in the mid-Victorian era – whether the martial power of the battlefield, or the economic power of the workplace. In each case, we see a cultural need to reconnect manliness to the contemporary holders of wealth, while yet rendering it (apparently) equally attainable by all male social groups. As such, the redistribution of manliness to the holders of power is countered by a comparable need to define manliness in relation to a morality based between the principles of obedience and control, whether of the self or of society. The core ideal of manliness may therefore be discovered within any role, whether that of the aristocratic lord, the middle class doctor or the lowly soutar, while the qualification of obedience and control reinforces the authority paradigm that renders the soutar subservient to the doctor (or the lord), even while they are equal in terms of manly characterisation. It is here that the homosocial bonds within the hierarchy are expressed, placing the highest-ranking 'manly' man at the head of the 'family' while a network of homosocial interaction (often mediated through or around the body of a woman) works to support him, and to ensure the smooth perpetuation of the patriarchal structure. In this way, the father – both literal and transcendental – is situated in a position of social authority, regulating the movements of his collective. In this role, he incorporates both the social responsibilities of paternalism (regulation and perpetuation of male authority) and the moral duty of domestic defence – the guarding against disruptive values – previously seen in representations of the Soldier body.

While my argument pays particular attention to the environments of the battlefield, the workplace and the family, that is not to disregard the importance of other homosocial networks within MacDonald's culture. The theatre of manly identity was enacted in many social groups, including the schools, the newly-formed scouting movement and similar male-only clubs (such as the YMCA and sporting societies). Nor did these environments necessarily mimic the paternalist, domestic structure as closely as those explored here – and this may be why they have little presence within MacDonald's narratives. For MacDonald, the power-relations of the domestic environment represent the social equivalent of the spiritual hierarchy – a mortal paternalism that *Malcolm* parallels to that governing the

Kingdom of Heaven (MacDonald, 1875b: II, 147).[105] It overlays the operation of the military environment, with immoral military action shown to act as a destructive force on the family network. Moreover, it is inhibited by mercenary Capitalism (or 'Mammonism'), situating materiality as a corrupter of the domestic and therefore separating the idealised concepts of work or home, even when that is shown to be an unworkable way of life outside of the narrative tradition. As such, within this chapter I consider MacDonald's representation of the domestic hierarchy in its literal state, looking at the development (and perpetuation) of manly identity within the mid-Victorian family. Eve Sedgwick demonstrates that in the family, as in other social environments, power is transferred and recognised through the operation of a homosocial network that regulates transactions of relative social, domestic or economic value. The conclusion of a successful transaction – frequently symbolised by the attainment of a virginal woman as wife – is therefore cemented by the approbation of other 'manly' characters, in particular that of the father. Meanwhile, unsuccessful transactions are signified by the surrender of manly identity to a more powerful, sexualised female body – what Sedgwick describes as a 'preemptive drama of heterosexual transgression' – and through the approbation of 'unworthy' men. Within such situations, resolution is only possible through the repentance of the transgressor – through renouncement of the bonds formed with unmanly men and 'unwomanly' women, and through an acceptance of paternal authority that precipitates the social recognition of the transgressor's new manly status. This successful transaction – signified by marriage to a 'worthy' woman – is therefore a transaction of power and manliness, negotiated between men 'over the dead, discredited, or disempowered body of a woman' (Sedgwick, 1993: 137).

In narratives from across his oeuvre, MacDonald explores the social and spiritual importance of these regulatory homosocial bonds, positioning them against a backdrop of contemporary philosopical (and political) debate. Previously, I have outlined MacDonald's portrayal of dystopias in which 'unmanly' men are allocated power in the absence of either morality or social obedience – both in the examples of rebellious soldiers (or workers), and in the examples of mercenary Capitalists. Here, I explore the perceived impact of imbuing an 'unmanly' man with power over a more literal domestic environment. This requires

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[105] While there are admittedly many constructions of 'family' possible in any society, the domestic structure I analyse is that proposed by MacDonald's narratives as a resolving influence on society – that is, one parent of each gender and (typically) a single, male child. Sedgwick argues that such a structure articulates the 'fantasy polarities of omnipotence and utter powerlessness' together with an environment in which 'other power transactions are mapped' (Sedgwick, 1993: 67).

consideration of the patriarch's role within his household – a role that encompasses the setting of rules as well as the regulation of the authority dynamic within dysfunctional environments. Moreover, it includes the role of education, ensuring that the values of manliness are transmitted across the generational boundary. In the absence of a 'manly' patriarch, we are shown the dangers, not only of domestic collapse, but of the perpetuation of immoral social principles (expressed through the abuse of power) through the family dynamic. Questions of vivisection and rape, eugenics and education, prostitution and enforced marriage, are therefore shown to be predicated on the failed operation of domestic authority – leaving the victimised body as a mere reinforcement of the need for patriarchal power; the 'paper' to the parcel of a morality-based paternalism.

Filial Obedience

In his analysis of the role of manliness in the Victorian domestic sphere, Tosh argues that transition between childhood and manhood was measured in defined stages, including the successful separation from the home, respectable employment or educational distinction, and finally, the assumption of authority within a new and stable domestic sphere (Tosh, 1995: 103). In *George MacDonald and his Wife*, Greville MacDonald relates a biographical example: 'George was strutting about in his first pair of trousers before his Uncle William, when the latter vowed he now needed only a watch and a wife to make a man of him. "I can do well enough wanting the watch," promptly answered the little fellow, "but – but, I would like that I had a wee wifie!"' (MacDonald, 2005: 53). This anecdote, recalled in the novel *Robert Falconer* (1868), demonstrates that even in MacDonald's family there was a pervasive (if often unrecognised) understanding of manliness as a quality tied to the social stage of masculine advancement. However, the lay definition of manliness in relation to the accumulation of trousers, wife and respectable employment led to conflict within narratives attempting to define the spiritual state of manhood, and Tosh describes the dilemma of 'many Christian writers on manliness who felt obliged to distance themselves from the coarser associations of the word which were still current' (Tosh, 1995: 114). The resultant 'transcendentalisation' of the male domestic role therefore necessarily obfuscates the material basis of manly authority, even while narrative tradition frequently rewards the holders of such

authority with an increase in material property, and consequent material (or political) power.[106]

In many of MacDonald's narratives, the development and transmission of male authority takes place within a paternalist hierarchy that works to ensure the perpetuation of 'manly' values across the generational boundary.[107] In this model, we see fathers assuming the role of teachers, while teachers likewise assume the authoritative position of fathers.[108] The development of young men is monitored and evaluated by the 'teachers' who thereby confirm manly status according to their own standard. However, in what MacDonald terms his 'Christian tragedies' (MacDonald, 1854: 635), we see characters whose premature desire to appear as 'men' leads them to seek approval from those who uphold a less stringent ideal of manly behaviour. This allows MacDonald to juxtapose two difference constructions of social masculinity – the one relating to material position (encompassing wealth, sexual prowess, the drinking of alcohol and social popularity), and the other relating to moral paternalism (encompassing self-control, filial obedience and social respectability). MacDonald's portrayal of the first as a juvenile, impatient and irresponsible masculinity allows him to associate it with other expressions of incomplete manly development, whether through themes of physical weakness, occupational incompetence or sexual transgression. In *A Rough Shaking,* Clare Skymer's potential is indicated by the comment that he 'was always too much of a man to want to look like a man by imitating men,' (MacDonald, 1891b: 59). However, in *Guild Court* (1868) and *Home Again* (1887), the active pursuit of non-paternal social recognition is described as both unmanly and foolish, with Thomas Worboise (*Guild Court*) refusing to utter any thought that might be perceived as unfashionable (MacDonald, 1868c: I, 3). In consequence, he appears as a shallow, vapid and altogether uninteresting character. Failing to become 'men', such characters remain childish (rather than child*like*) until they are reunited with their social and spiritual fathers.

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[106] See, for example, the hidden identity / paternal inheritance narratives of *Malcolm* and *There & Back*, or the narratives of inheritance through marriage – such as *Thomas Wingfold, Curate*, *Annals of a Quiet Neighbourhood* and *Donal Grant*.

[107] Examples include *Alec Forbes of Howglen*, in relation to Alec Forbes and Mr. Cupples; *David Elginbrod*, in relation to Hugh Sutherland and David Elginbrod; *Thomas Wingfold, Curate*, in relation to Thomas Wingfold and Mr. Polwarth. In each case, the 'visionary' teacher assumes a paternal relationship to the student, and instructs them in the values required of a 'manly' man.

[108] See for example the relationship of Hugh Sutherland and David Elginbrod in *David Elginbrod*, and the later relationship between Hugh Sutherland and his pupil Davy in the same narrative (MacDonald, 1863).

In *Home Again*, a similar desire for social praise becomes stronger than Walter Colman's understanding of the behaviours that inspire praise – a counter-productive situation that results in his social dissolution. He does not gain 'true manliness', but instead *performs* his limited understanding of the role. Abandoning his 'unquestioning paternalism',[109] he leaves home and embarks on a career as a literary critic, doing so with the desire of 'realizing all he had longed for but feared to subject to paternal scrutiny' (MacDonald, 1887: 40). From this moment, the social trappings of manly status are distorted by materialism in the absence of paternalism. Firstly, he begins to disdain his work as a critic, reasoning that 'he had done nothing, even in his own eyes, while the recognition of the world was lacking!' (MacDonald, 1887: 48). In doing so, he places the value of recognition above that of work, becoming what MacDonald describes as 'a contemptible workman who thinks of his claims before his duties' (MacDonald, 1887: 57). Next, however, we are introduced to the agent of his social and professional collapse. He seeks a relationship with the physically beautiful, materially wealthy Lady Lufa, yet fails to perceive that she is as hollow and insipid as the poetry she writes - 'a very pretty French something [...] carved out of nothing at all' (MacDonald, 1887: 85). She swiftly assumes power within their relationship. At their meeting, she already has material power, being a wealthy woman of aristocratic birth. However, she also has the power of experience (specifically sexual experience), as is indicated by the red staining of her dress – 'something white, with a shimmer of red about it, and a blush-rose in the front' (MacDonald, 1887: 70). Moreover, her willingness to manipulate the apparently naive Walter Coleman is indicated by the performance of her appearance: when they meet for the first time, MacDonald notes that her 'child-like' eyes are 'for the occasion "worn" wide', giving a manifestly deceptive illusion of innocence (MacDonald, 1887: 70). MacDonald concludes his description of their meeting with the observation that Walter's 'bewitchment' is in itself an indication of his own failings, suggesting that his ability to take Lufa for an approximation of ideal womanhood reflects how far he himself has drifted from the articulation of ideal manliness (MacDonald, 1887: 71). Under Lufa's influence (and without the guidance of his father), Walter is led to neglect the responsibilities of his profession – awarding praise where none is due (yet where it suits Lufa's ambitions), and distributing criticism to works that would otherwise be seen as valuable.[110] In the process, Walter's professional credibility (like

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[109] Sedgwick describes 'unquestioning paternalism' as an implicit belief that the goals of the son (or servant) are the same as those for the father (or master) (Sedgwick, 1993: 69).

[110] It is entirely likely that Walter's failures may also be a complaint against literary critics more generally, since MacDonald's narratives at this time had come under increasing fire for their didacticism.

that of Robert Bruce in *Alec Forbes of Howglen*) is destroyed, leaving him in debt and ridiculed by the very society whose approval he had previously courted.

Walter's early abandonment of his home (and of his father) therefore results in social and economic ruin, underpinned by suggestions of a lack of religious faith resulting from his disobedience of the father. Indeed, throughout the narrative Walter is compared to the Prodigal Son, emphasising the role of filial disobedience in his social situation. The narrator ironically comments that Walter 'was not a prodigal; he was a well-behaved youth' before qualifying his statement with the thought that 'He was *only* proud, *only* thought much of himself; was *only* pharisaical, not hypocritical; was *only* neglectful of those nearest him, always polite to those comparatively nothing to him' (MacDonald, 1887: 76). Later, the narrator emphasises the relationship between faith, obedience and social success with the comment that Walter's ambitions derive from his dissatisfaction 'with the father by whom the Father of fathers had sent him into the world,' confirming the suggestion that rebellion against a father (or natural authority figure) is synonymous with rebellion against God (MacDonald, 1887: 78). However, Walter's social collapse finally precipitates his redeeming physical collapse during which finds himself 'fast drifting back into childhood' (MacDonald, 1887: 249). He realises 'how insufficient he was for himself', and recalls childhood illnesses during which 'pain seemed to melt' under the 'ministrations' of his father and mother (MacDonald, 1887: 249). In this state, he begins to see the 'golden root' at the foundation of words that he had previously seen as 'platitudes of theological commonplace', and is 'filled by alternate dreams of suffering and home-deliverance', describing himself at last as 'the prodigal son in the parable' (MacDonald, 1887: 249).

Walter's realisation of his own spiritual paucity leads him to compare his own actions in the workplace with other professions, causing him to denounce his career in literary criticism as a 'trade' rather than 'a profession' on account of his propensity to write for social praise rather than duty (MacDonald, 1887: 298). He describes himself as 'a king sitting upon a great tarnished throne, dusty and worm-eaten', creating an image of himself as patriarch over a barren land (MacDonald, 1887: 279). Next, he sees himself as a soldier 'lying under a heap of dead on the battle-field' yet unable to die himself 'because I had fought, not for the right, but for the glory of a soldier' (MacDonald, 1887: 279). Comparing his own desire for 'manliness'

with his growing understanding of the sublime in terms of work and family, Walter repents, and we are told that his repentance did not 'leave him at his earthly father's door, but led him on to his father in heaven (MacDonald, 1887: 283). At last, returns home and greets his father with the words 'Father, I have sinned' (MacDonald, 1887: 267). Walter's eventual development of manliness spans the final five chapters of the book, in which we see his gradual re-assimilation into the home. By the final chapter, the influence of repentance, filial devotion is expressed in his ability to fall in love with his idealised, virginal cousin Molly, and in the corresponding development of physical manliness. From being a 'pale' and 'slenderly built' poet with a 'small, pale moustache' and an 'uninteresting mouth', he is transformed into a 'broad-shouldered, lean, powerful' farmer 'with a rather slow step, but soldierly carriage' (MacDonald, 1887: 10; 11; 308). He concludes the narrative in service to his father, and in possession of the love and admiration of his domestic network.

In *Home Again*, we see how the desire for social recognition leads to the imperfect performance of a manly identity, with the understanding that masculine failure is inevitable if a character chooses to actively seek the approval of society. This inverse relationship between social approbation and manliness is frequently seen within MacDonald's narratives, and draws attention to an intriguing conflict in his portrayal of masculine self-representation. Indeed, even for MacDonald's idealised male characters, the social recognition of manhood is a problematic necessity, since the narrator's depiction of manliness requires those qualities to be recognised by the reader. Within such instances, we witness a careful balance that allows us to witness the approval of other characters, yet which requires the man to remain unaware of their approval, or of the actions inspiring their approval. Within MacDonald's early single-perspective narratives (such as *Phantastes*), this process relies upon direct communication between the narrator and the reader, while the later inclusion of multiple perspectives allows us to witness a manly characterisation through the reactions of other characters – in particular those 'manly' characters comprising his social network.[111]

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[111] The case of Donal Grant is something of an anomaly here. Following the death of his new wife, he decides to reject inheritance of her property because he will not allow society to think that he 'looks to the main chance as keenly as another!' (MacDonald, 1883: III, 297). The question of moral or manly action is therefore co-opted by Donal's awareness of public opinion, and he declares that 'He would starve before he would have men say so – yes, even say so falsely' (MacDonald, 1883: III, 297).

Much like Walter Colman in *Home Again*, Anodos, the protagonist of *Phantastes* (1858), struggles to discover his manly identity within an unfamiliar environment (in this case a psychological 'fairy-land'), following his abrupt separation from the home. However, like Walter (whose search for manliness leads him to court social rather than patriarchal approval), Anodos finds himself imprisoned within a tower – locked away from his full potential by the personification of his own conceit.[112] Ashamed, Anodos retrospectively admits to the reader, 'I honoured knighthood too highly, to call myself any longer one of the noble brotherhood' (MacDonald, 1858: 287). He concludes that 'he that will be a hero, will barely be a man; that he that will be nothing but a doer of his work, is sure of his manhood' (MacDonald, 1858: 287). Repentant, and determined to achieve his masculine potential, Anodos decides to abandon his pursuit of knighthood in favour of divine service – becoming a nameless servant to the heroic Rusty Knight.

Anodos's decision to reject social distinction as a hero so that he may legitimately be perceived as a man, contains an implicit paradox. While represented as the transition between the *appearance* and *fact* of manliness (just as MacDonald defines Christianity as the difference between the *appearance* and *fact* of faith), the signifier for a masculine facade is that it is performative – constructed in order to be viewed by contemporaries. However, Anodos's decision to assume anonymous servitude is equally performative, since the decision is founded on his desire to portray deeper masculine qualities.[113] Just as his first performance betrays his awareness of the opinion of those around him, so does his second performance betray his awareness of the reader as a conscious judge. Through his internal dialogue, Anodos implicitly addresses the reader and justifies his actions – whether assuming a position of service to the heroic Rusty Knight, giving up his pursuit of the beautiful 'marble lady' when she falls for a 'better man', or sacrificing himself to rescue his companions from the metaphorical 'wolf' of false doctrine.

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[112] This is a literal representation of the situation, as Anodos is imprisoned by a Knight who is his double, save that his armour is 'brighter', his body 'greater' and his expression 'fiercer'. Despite recognising this to be an evil doppelganger, Anodos explains that 'he could not help feeling some admiration for him' (MacDonald, 1858: 285).

[113] Maureen Martin describes this phenomenon as 'a theactricality of asceticism and restraint in which masculine authority was grounded on the male body as heroic spectacle' (Martin, 2009: 6).

Through the first-person narration, Anodos presents his thought-processes to the reader for approval, and demonstrates the validity of his claim to manliness when he returns from fairyland after his twenty-first birthday, responsible now for the well-being of his sisters and his property, and able to fulfil the civic duties attendant on manhood. His situation recalls that of the ensign in 'The Broken Swords', who deliberately avoids tasks that would bring 'commendation and not honour' and in consequence is awarded tasks that are 'in any manner distinguished' (MacDonald, 1854: 646). Together, Anodos and the soldier receive a reward for their willingness to abjure contemporary distinction – but their reward is more of that same distinction, which is in turn portrayed as the inevitable consequence of conforming to a socially-constructed vision of internal, spiritual manliness.

Within these earlier single-perspective narratives, direct communication plays an essential role in MacDonald's signification of masculine status – which in turn informs the reader of the qualities that MacDonald considers desirable in men. However, the 1864 *Adela Cathcart* demonstrates the increased complexity of masculine signification in narratives that involve a high level of character interaction. More commonly regarded as a mere vehicle for MacDonald's popular fairytales, *Adela Cathcart* provides a fascinating insight into the duties (and dangers) attendant on domestic manliness, and into the complexity of the homosocial network that regulates male authority in the home. When Ralph Armstrong tells the story of 'The Broken Swords' to his friends, his masculine status is communicated through a network of character interactions that insulate him from the direct praise of his contemporaries. Not only is the reader invited to judge the story according to Ralph's own history (in which he describes the early abandonment of his curacy as necessary for the development of his spiritual 'muscle')[114], but the reactions of other characters also inform the reader's judgement. John Smith's recognition of the story as Ralph Armstrong's history 'set in other, more striking, forms' is a direct communication of approval from the narrator to the reader, and this approval is reinforced when the heroine's father (himself a Colonel) expresses his wish that the ensign (who doubles as the curate) had been promoted rather than killed (MacDonald, 1864a: II, 260). Ralph Armstrong's masculine qualities are then described past the point of evidence, when John Smith imagines a conversation between himself and the curate – one that pictures the curate refusing to accept praise on the grounds that 'all he had done was quite easy to do--he had found no difficulty in it' (MacDonald, 1864a: II, 261).

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[114] See page 35.

Through the vehicle of an imagined conversation, MacDonald allows his 'hero' to respond to the praise of his contemporaries, while yet remaining unaware of its existence.

In *Adela Cathcart*, manliness is portrayed, enacted and evaluated by a social network formed around a desire to cure the eponymous heroine of spiritual apathy disguised as sickness. However, this spiritual apathy is soon revealed to have a basis in the appropriate performance of a female domestic identity, being symptomised by a lack of emotional acuity, indifference to the paradigm of domestic authority and, above all, an inability to fall in love with a 'manly' man. As such, the method of Adela's cure becomes a reinstatement of her feminine identity at the hands of a man capable of relocating her within the domestic paradigm. It is, in effect, a validation of manly identity within a homosocial network formed around the need to cure the body (and mind) of an imperfect woman; what Sedgwick describes as 'the enforcement of women's relegation within the framework of homosocial exchange' (Sedgwick, 1993: 121). Following Dr Wade's failure to cure her with medicine, Adela's domestic network (organised and inspired by the overlapping efforts of Dr Harry Armstrong and curate Ralph Armstrong) attempts to cure her with stories – an experimental treatment that is also a test of each character's manliness since 'None but a pure man can understand women – I mean the true womanhood that is in them' (MacDonald, 1864a: I, 114). These stories are useful in two ways. Firstly, many of them contain implicit guidance on the criteria by which masculine and feminine status can be attained. Stories such as 'The Light Princess', 'The Broken Swords' and 'The Castle' highlight the social dangers attendant on immoderate or intemperate attitudes, and delineate the ways in which a fallen character might be redeemed – culminating with their growth towards obedience, self-control and eventually marriage.[115] However, these stories also provide a standard by which to measure the masculine potential of each male member of the reading-circle, whether through the reactions of his contemporaries or through the impact of that character's chosen narrative on Adela's physical and spiritual health. Indeed, in many ways Adela's wellbeing is relegated to the status of a narratological signifier of manliness, with stories (representing both her body and her femininity) passed from man to man as the narrator searches for a character who is morally capable of assuming authority over her physical and spiritual health.

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[115] For a deeper analysis of patriarchal authority in 'The Castle: A Parable', see page 94. For a deeper analysis of the feminine body in 'The Light Princess', see page 185.

In terms of masculine potential, the least successful character is Percy Cathcart – a 'rather repellent' and 'self-approving' 'puppy', whose lack of both physical and spiritual maturity is indicated by the youthful animalism of the last description (MacDonald, 1864a: I, 16; 26). He does not attempt to understand or cure Adela's 'true womanhood' by telling stories – instead, he prefers to lounge on the sofa or sleep through the efforts of the other characters. Colonel Cathcart articulates the disapproval of his domestic network by criticising his behaviour, saying 'I don't like to see you showing to disadvantage, Percy' (MacDonald, 1864a: II, 274). When Percy claims to love Adela, Harry Armstrong confirms Colonel Cathcart's disparagement, exclaiming 'Upon my word, I shouldn't have thought it. Here have we been all positively conspiring to do her good, and you have been paying ten times the attention to the dogs and horses that you have paid to her' (MacDonald, 1864a: III, 165). Harry's comments are supported by the narrator's characterisation of Percy's actions. When Ralph Armstrong's first sermon moves Adela to tears, Percy is to be found outside the Church, 'standing astride of an infant's grave, with his hands in his trowser-pockets' (MacDonald, 1864a: I, 45). This apparently callous disregard for both the infant and his cousin leads John Smith to describe Percy's relationship with Adela as 'a very different indifference' (MacDonald, 1864a: I, 48) – a play on words that highlights both a lack of attraction between the couple, and the fact that Percy's 'indifference' is cultivated as a display of fashionable masculinity.

Percy's lack of masculine potential is therefore revealed by the criticism of his domestic network, whether direct (as with Colonel Cathcart and Harry Armstrong), or indirect (through the disapproving observations of the narrator John Smith). Their complaints are upheld by his failure to understand Adela, compounded by the lack of interest he shows in her cure. Instead, like Walter in *Home Again* Percy renders himself foolish by attempting to style himself as a fashionable 'man', trying to appear both uninterested and domestically independent. Percy's callous stance over the infant's grave is echoed by his callous comments to Adela. While appearing solicitous (offering her his arm), his words are careless: 'You don't look very stunning' (MacDonald, 1864a: I, 46). Through the portrayed conflict of words and actions, Percy is represented as a person more careful of appearance than substance, and this is corroborated by his fashionable exterior and tendency to use slang expressions. Equally destructive is his contempt for his family and the Church. Despite witnessing the faith of his family, together with the emotional impact of Ralph Armstrong's sermon on Adela, Percy

dismissively relegates Church attendance to a 'little whim' (MacDonald, 1864a: I, 46). More emphatically disrespectful, he criticises family and friends, describing John Smith as an 'old fogie' and reacting with horror when he finds that his mother has arrived at Colonel Cathcart's house: 'My mother here! I'll just ring the bell, and tell James to pack my traps. I won't stand it. I can't. Indeed I can't' (MacDonald, 1864a: I, 49). Even the story-telling is not exempt, being described as 'horrid slow,' despite its obviously beneficial impact on Adela's health (MacDonald, 1864a: III, 167). Percy's behaviour alienates him from the central institutions regulating MacDonald's vision of manliness: that of domesticity (embodying familial patriarchy), and that of the Church (embodying spiritual patriarchy). Concerned with the approval of fashionable society over spiritual manhood, and careless of the authority paradigm regulating his own ascension to fatherhood, Percy Cathcart sacrifices the respect of those on whom the reader depends for the communication of masculine success – the manly men included in his own domestic network.

Validating Manly Authority

Following the demonstration of filial obedience (with corresponding religious faith and distinction in the workplace), the next stage of manly development according to John Tosh's outline is that of establishing a new domestic environment by becoming a husband (Tosh, 1995: 103). In this section, I shall demonstrate how the development of manliness qualifies characters to assume the state of domestic authority. This is supported by representations of destructive domestic networks, controlled by 'unmanly men' who have assumed positions of authority without a corresponding manly development. In such situations, it is left to MacDonald's 'manly men' to act as 'moral policemen', either awakening the failed patriarch to the responsibilities of his position, or else removing him from power.

As already described, in *Adela Cathcart* the doctor (Harry Armstrong) appears as a counter to the weak and insensitive Percy Cathcart. It is Harry who demonstrates the clearest understanding of Adela's condition, and whose manly identity is likewise the most obviously evident, despite his being a relative stranger to the family. Seeing that Adela's spiritual sensitivity has been stifled by poor education and lethargy, it is Harry who conceives the plan

to cure her through storytelling.[116] Although he initially tells no stories of his own (confining himself to reciting poems and songs derived from MacDonald's beloved German Romantics), his manly nature is constantly alluded to. Quite aside from his powerful physique and the muscular connotations of his surname, the reader is given numerous examples of Harry's self-deprecating manner and unconscious heroism. When a patient goes into labour during a dangerous winter storm, Harry rides to her assistance, ignoring the friends who beg him to put his own safety first. Both Colonel Cathcart and Ralph Armstrong express admiration and support for Harry riding out, with Ralph declaring that 'I would rather have you brought home dead to-morrow, than see you sitting by that fire five minutes after your mare comes' (MacDonald, 1864a: II, 187). Ralph's comment is a more emphatic echo of Colonel Cathcart's association of Harry's duty with that of a military man: 'I am an old soldier, and I trust I know what duty is. The only question is, Can this be done?' (MacDonald, 1864a: II, 185). The military connotations of Harry's profession have been examined in the previous chapter, and confirm his role as one of self-forgetful heroic manliness. It is a contrast to the representation of Adela's previous doctor as one who 'comes here for his fees', having previously 'embalmed' himself that he might treat patients 'by clockwork' (MacDonald, 1864a: 28).

Michael Brown describes the construction of medical rhetoric as the 'parallel development of "Christian militarism" and "muscular Christianity"', challenging a view of medicine as non-religious, brutal or commercial by introducing martial language and themes of martyrdom more usually associated with the clerical profession (Brown, 2010: 595). Harry's status as doctor is therefore rendered sublime by his willingness to sacrifice himself, and MacDonald goes to great lengths to emphasise the level of danger to which Harry exposes himself. In a spectacularly indirect communication of Harry manly status, Ralph Armstrong echoes the Colonel's concerns with the expectation that the trip will kill his brother, and their comments reinforce the fears of the other characters. This build-up of the threat ignores the fact that another man has ridden to bring them word of the patient's condition, and allows Harry to appear more heroic when he attempts to dismiss the danger, declaring the trip to be his duty. Indeed, he appears more concerned about the effect that the stress of worrying about him will have on Adela, and confides to his sister-in-law; 'There is really no particular danger. And I don't want my patient there frightened and thrown back' (MacDonald, 1864a: II, 188).

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[116] Adela's poor education is discussed further in Chapter 6: Unmuscular Christianity – Obfuscating Femininity.

Despite his lack of story-telling, Harry's calm displays of manly determination, self-control and duty form their own narrative for Adela's spiritual education. As he rides out, the narrator wonders whether the doctor had observed Adela's 'expression of admiring apprehension' as she watches 'the strong man about to fight the storm, and all ready to meet it' (MacDonald, 1864a: II, 188). The eventual result of his courage is a relationship with Adela, culminating in a marriage that is described as the final aspect of her 'cure'.

Unaware of his own masculine status, yet committed to the sublime performance of his professional duty, Harry Armstrong is presented as a worthy patriarch qualified to assume control over a domestic network with Adela Cathcart at its heart. It is a triumphant romance plot within a social vision founded upon paternalism, in which marriage involved the transition of authority from one patriarch to another – with the result that the values and beliefs of the husband displace those of the father as the foundation for a new domestic sphere. However, not all of MacDonald's romance plots are triumphant. In narratives such as *Thomas Wingfold, Curate*, *Malcolm* and *The Marquis of Lossie* we are shown the potential damage caused by the premature promotion of an 'unworthy man' to a position of domestic power.

When Helen Lingard begins to consider George Bascombe as a potential husband in *Thomas Wingfold, Curate*, the reader is invited to observe Bascombe's moral and political positions as a reflection of his lack of manliness. While as a couple Helen and George are described as a Darwinian perfection, looking 'as fine an instance of natural selection as the world had to show', Bascombe exists in complete physical and spiritual opposition to Thomas Wingfold, the novel's hero (MacDonald, 1876a: I, 71). Bascombe is socially popular and confident, being 'tall and handsome as an Apollo, and strong as the young Hercules', yet these references to Greek heroes are contextually ironic (MacDonald, 1876a: I, 22). In the years following Pater's 1873 publication of the intensely controversial *Studies in the History of the Renaissance*, the Greek ideal came to symbolise (at least among the more conservative members of the population) the corrupting influences of decadence and hedonism.[117] While appearing to praise Bascombe's masculine aspect, MacDonald instead warns the reader that this apparent masculinity is a facade that disguises both superficiality and amorality. This is

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[117] The influences of Pater, Aestheticism and Decadence are discussed in greater depth in Chapter 5: Saintly Androgyny.

corroborated by MacDonald's depiction of Bascombe wearing 'the top of the plainest fashion', indicating his identity as one who is consciously performing his understanding of unconscious masculinity (MacDonald, 1876a: I, 22). In contrast, Wingfold is diminutive and hesitant, appearing 'nothing remarkable' with 'a good forehead' and 'a questionable nose' (MacDonald, 1876a: I, 21). Indeed, at the start of the narrative (during which we witness the collapse of Wingfold's superficial faith) we are told that he 'might have been a lawyer just as well as a clergyman' (MacDonald, 1876a: I, 21).

Unlike Bascombe, Wingfold is far from self-confident. His tendency to say '"*Don't you think?*" far oftener than "*I think*"' demonstrates not only his own inherent uncertainty and self-abnegation, but also unwillingness to claim the conviction of an opinion that he doesn't find 'interesting enough to himself to seem worth defending with any approach to vivacity' (MacDonald, 1876a: I, 24). Bascombe, on the other hand, takes pleasure in the argument over the subject matter discussed, being accustomed to 'lay down the law, but in gentlemanly fashion, and not as if he cared a bit about the thing in question himself (MacDonald, 1876a: I, 24). His lack of faith in his own arguments is described as 'not quite satisfactory to the morally fastidious man,' leaving him open to the same accusation of superficiality that Wingfold later levels at his parishioners (MacDonald, 1876a: I, 23). Bascombe's atheism is thereby placed in the same light as his flirtation controversial political and philosophical movements such as eugenics, Communism and capital punishment. While capable of propounding such concepts in the abstract, each time Bascombe is faced with a specific application of his policy, he refrains. Despite knowing (or suspecting) that Helen's brother Leopold is a murderer, Bascombe fights to keep his confession private for the sake of the family name.

The extremity (and hypocrisy) of Bascombe's arguments is demonstrated when he first sees Rachel Polwarth, a young woman whose intense spirituality is described as consequent to the physical suffering generated by her dwarfism. Disgusted, he exclaims 'Such creatures have no right to existence. The horrid manakin [sic]!' (MacDonald, 1876a: I, 82). He continues, 'She ought to have been strangled the moment she was born – for the sake of humanity. Monsters ought not to live' (MacDonald, 1876a: I, 82). Ginger Stelle describes MacDonald's interest in Darwinism and eugenics as a reaction against the debates inspired by Francis

Galton's controversial 1873 paper 'Human Improvement', which postulated that the 'privileging of the race over the individual "may come to be looked upon as one of the chief religious obligations"' (Galton, 1873: 120, cited in Stelle, 2013: 57). Stelle notes that the concept of sacrificing the individual for the sake of the collective implicitly contradicted MacDonald's focus on the reform of the individual, and created a dangerous assumption that individual worth is contained in the construction of the body rather than the spirit (Stelle, 2013: 59; 61).[118] His decision to portray Galton's theories as those belonging to an atheist is telling. For all Bascombe's apparent 'Darwinian perfection', his support of eugenics demonstrates a willingness to victimise the individual for the sake of an atheistic view of race and species. That Bascombe does not in fact support his own policies in no way mitigates MacDonald's representation of him as a dangerously foolish individual. When Bascombe commutes Rachel Polwarth's sentence from execution to sterilisation – or the implementation of 'suitable enactments and penalties' against her marriage – he does so, not because he realises the injustice of the policy, but because Helen (who he had been trying to impress) disapproves (MacDonald, 1876a: I, 83). Through his retraction, he demonstrates that he is less interested in justifying his policy than he is with convincing Helen of his argument. Insidiously, he proceeds to couch his philosophy of eugenics in terms of Communism, advocating to Helen the necessity for 'the resignation of certain personal rights for the securing of other and more important ones' (MacDonald, 1876a: I, 84). Refraining from the articulation of the more explicitly brutal elements of eugenics, Bascombe finds himself able to secure Helen's half-hearted approval, and to therefore influence her moral judgements (MacDonald, 1876a: I, 84).

In a strange reinforcement of Bascombe's policy of preventing 'monsters' from marrying, MacDonald takes this opportunity to point out the inherent danger of permitting marriage to an 'unworthy' man. Bascombe's influence over Helen's political and moral perspective is represented as the early precursor to his influence over her as husband. Indeed, Bascombe's decision to court Helen stems from his realisation that 'She listened so well, was so ready to take what he presented to her, was evidently so willing a pupil' (MacDonald, 1876a: I, 72). Describing Bascombe's apparent mission 'to destroy the beliefs of everybody else,' the

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[118] Stelle's point is astutely made, and MacDonald makes his opposition to eugenics clear. However, his focus on individual reform likewise prioritises the collective over the individual, demanding that the individual be re-educated in the social duties of citizenship. Likewise, while the spirit undoubtedly takes precedence over the body in MacDonald's narratives, the tendency to associate male morality with a 'manly' physique makes his argument slightly ironic.

narrator communicates his horror that Bascombe is 'about to assume, if she should permit him, the unspiritual direction of her being' (MacDonald, 1876a: I, 62). Through his arguments, Bascombe takes advantage of Helen's impressionable nature, which is alluded to by her ability change her mood according to the weather, and to change her thoughts according to the 'phantom conclusions' of other members of her social network (MacDonald, 1876a: I, 6). Despite her initial protests ('Unfortunately they have all got mothers'), he soon convinces her that it is appropriate for Rachel Polwarth to resign her personal rights for the greater good of society (MacDonald, 1876a: I, 82). Similarly, she is almost convinced by his argument for atheism, and under his guidance prevents her dying brother from finding peace through confession. Her performance of the maternal and sisterly role is therefore co-opted by Bascombe's influence, just as her obedience to the religious patriarchy is impeded by his avowal of atheism. Lacking the conviction of her own moral (and feminine) base, Helen instead absorbs the political and religious theories of an unworthy potential husband – which theories remain unchallenged until she begins to listen to the sermons of the reformed hero Thomas Wingfold. Under his guidance, she begins to question Bascombe's principles, and eventually allows Wingfold to visit her brother – thereby re-establishing herself within a religious and domestic framework. The narrative climax is her eventual decision to marry Wingfold instead of Bascombe, supplanting the half-considered social philosophies of a superficial man with the religious convictions of the idealised protagonist.

In the 1875 novel *Malcolm* (together with its sequel *The Marquis of Lossie*), we see another example of how the succession of an unworthy patriarch to a position of authority has severe ramifications for the moral and political health of the nation, and how the social threat may be neutralised by the re-establishment of patriarchal authority at the hands of an idealised man. The first example we see is a power-struggle between the Marquis and his daughter, Lady Florimel. Later, the Marquis's failure to assert domestic control is paralleled to the rebellion of his tenants, first within a conventicle (as discussed in the previous chapter), and later (after the Marquis's death) as the result of a prospective Clearance. The Marquis's lack of moral authority is therefore translated from the domestic realm onto the nation, reflecting his weakness as a man as well as his unsuitability for power.

Physically, the Marquis's unmanly nature is articulated (like that of George Bascombe) by a Greek appearance, while his undeveloped physical strength indicates his inability to influence those around him in a meaningful manner. Moreover, his body is repeatedly contrasted with that of his heroic son. Malcolm's physical strength and natural authority are taken as indicators of his noble birth, the Marquis is a weak, hesitant man whose character and behaviour counteract the physical gifts of his social position. While both the Marquis and his son have blue eyes, Malcolm's are 'clear and direct', whereas the 'light blue hazy eyes' of the Marquis give the impression of uncertainty (MacDonald, 1875b: I, 160). Similarly, the Marquis share's Malcolm's breadth of shoulder, yet he does not possess a correspondingly powerful physique. Instead, he is described as 'rather thin', with a youthful appearance that belies the authority of age. This is described as a consequence of his character, being accounted for by the fact that 'his conscience had never bitten him very deep' (MacDonald, 1875b: I, 159). Even the Marquis's facial characteristics indicate his uncertain morality. While Malcolm has 'large features, not finely cut, and a look of mingled nobility and ingenuousness - the latter amounting to simplicity, or even innocence', the Marquis has 'fine features of the aquiline Greek type' (MacDonald, 1875b: I, 160). Through descriptions of his body, the Marquis demonstrates how immorality can corrupt Malcolm's 'picturesque masculinity' into an apparently degenerate effeminacy that articulates his inability to maintain the authority of his station. This is confirmed when Malcolm assumes the task of restoring order , first correcting the rebellious behaviour of the Marquis's mare Kelpie, then pacifying the rebelling township. Finally, he acts with uncompromising domestic authority when he takes steps to restrain Lady Florimel's 'wild' behaviour. In doing so, he acts to correct an authority paradigm left to disintegrate in the wake of the Marquis's careless behaviour.

Prior to Malcolm's neutralisation of Florimel in *The Marquis of Lossie*, we are told that the Marquis 'neither exercised the needful authority over her, nor treated her as a companion,' leaving Florimel to 'run wild' (MacDonald, 1875b: I, 161; 162). This failure to uphold his own authority is exacerbated by his divided status as both father and seducer, since 'There was yet enough of the father in him to expect those qualities in her to which in other women he had been an insidious foe; but had he not done what in him lay to destroy his right of claiming such from her?' (MacDonald, 1875b: I, 162). The moral hypocrisy of the Marquis's predicament is emphasised by the narrator's question, 'How many of the qualities he

understood and enjoyed in women could he desire to see developed in his daughter?' (MacDonald, 1875b: I, 162). In *A Man's Place*, Tosh describes a belief amongst mid-Victorian moralists that the failure of domestic patriarchy would 'reap a bitter harvest of failed sons and wayward daughters' (Tosh, 1995: 95). He continues, 'the man who was not master in his own house courted the scorn of his male associates, as well as economic ruin and uncertain paternity' (Tosh, 1995: 3). When Lizzie Partan falls pregnant with Lord Meikleham's illegitimate son, the reader is left to reflect on the fact that her mother 'was a termagant' whose 'husband's real name was of as little consequence in life as it is in my history' (MacDonald, 1875b: I, 164). His ineffective paternal control is ceded to a mother who is described as 'a great stickler for every authority in the country except that of husbands, in which she declared she did not believe' (MacDonald, 1875b: III, 64). The Marquis's control of his daughter is portrayed as equally destructive. When her father swears in her company, Florimel mimics him, saying 'every time you say a bad word in my presence, I shall say it after you. I shan't mind who's there - parson or magistrate' (MacDonald, 1875b: I, 257).

After this incident, Florimel's behaviour grows increasingly inappropriate. She alternately respects and insults Malcolm; she declares her love of the artist Lenorme, then abandons him for a more superficially acceptable marriage; she demonstrates loathing and disdain for both Lord Liftore (previously known as Meikleham) and his 'bold-faced' aunt, yet accepts his marriage proposal. Her flighty and contrary nature threatens to make Liftore Marquis, despite knowing him to be the father of an illegitimate child, and despite witnessing his brutal and callous behaviour to those below him in terms of social status. When Malcolm's blind grandfather Duncan is invited to play the bag-pipes before the Marquis's friends, one of the lords slits the pipe-bag as a joke. They then proceed to tease him, provoking a violent reaction from the proud Celt. Witnessing Duncan's anger, we are told that Meikleham 'would have proposed whipping the highland beggar [...] were it not for the probability the old clothes horse would fall to pieces' (MacDonald, 1875b: I, 267). His cowardice is demonstrated when Lady Florimel archly suggests he try whipping the muscular Malcolm instead, leaving Meikleham looking 'both mortified and spiteful' (MacDonald, 1875b: I, 268). As such, when Florimel accepts Meikleham's suit, she threatens to knowingly give a disreputable and vindictive man direct power over a tenantry already on the point of rebellion. Fortunately, Malcolm is able to intercede. In order to prevent their marriage (or to

prevent Liftore's acquisition of the property on their marriage), Malcolm chooses to reveal that not only is he the legal heir (and therefore in a position of domestic authority over his sister), but that her father's sexual behaviour had led him (however unknowingly) into bigamy.

Stripped of her title, her name and her identity, Florimel finds herself completely dependent upon Malcolm's good will. Under the guise of ensuring her safety, Malcolm uses his new position to compel her behaviour, saying 'If my sister marries him [...] not one shilling shall she take with her beyond what she may happen to have in her purse at the moment. She is in my power, and I will use it to the utmost to protect her from that man' (MacDonald, 1878: 363). He justifies his actions by saying:

> Florimel, I loved my sister, and longed for her goodness. But she has foiled all my endeavours. She has not loved or followed the truth. She has been proud and disdainful, and careless of right. Yourself young and pure, and naturally recoiling from evil, you have yet cast from you the devotion of a noble, gifted, large hearted, and great souled man, for the miserable preference of the smallest, meanest, vilest of men. Nor that only! for with him you have sided against the woman he most bitterly wrongs: and therein you wrong the nature and the God of women (MacDonald, 1878: 364).

Still unable to compel her (unless by physically gripping her arm), he threatens to 'go from this room to publish in the next that you are neither Lady Lossie nor Lady Flormel Colonsay. You have no right to any name but your mother's. You are Miss Gordon' (MacDonald, 1878: 365).

The contrast between Malcolm's success in regulating his sister's behaviour, and the Marquis's success in regulating his daughter's behaviour, demonstrates their differing approximations to 'true manliness'. Despite being a biological father and aristocrat, the Marquis lacks the moral and spiritual qualities to adequately fulfil the patriarchal role. Under his authority, Florimel learns to swear and to acquiesce to Lord Liftore's plans. Similarly, the Marquis proves unable to regulate the behaviour of his tenants as a result of his own

irresponsible management. Paralleling his approach to fatherhood, we are told that the Marquis is kind to his 'remote inferiors' and would 'encourage them to liberties' – however the narrator cautions that the Marquis may also at times 'take greater with them than they might find agreeable' (MacDonald, 1875b: I, 160). A third parallel is offered in the Marquis's relationship to his mare Kelpie and his dog Demon. The narrator notes that the Marquis is 'fond of animals – would sit for an hour stroking the head of Demon, his great Irish deerhound; but at other times would tease him to a wrath which touched verge of dangerous' (MacDonald, 1875b: I, 160). The interchangeable imagery between daughter, tenants and dog positions all three at the subservient end of the authority paradigm, and also creates a parallel in the social danger that their insurgence signifies. In *Paul Faber, Surgeon,* Walter Drake describes his fear of wealth is described in a similar fashion, acknowledging as an amoral force that has slipped beyond his capacity for control. An impoverished minister, he expresses concern that Mammon may become 'a Caliban to whom he might not be able to play Prospero [...]'a demon he had raised, for whom he must find work, or be torn by him into fragments' (MacDonald, 1879b: II, 110). Unable to exert the necessary control over his own desires, or over his subordinates, the Marquis fails as both man and patriarch, leaving his son to assert the necessary authoritative structures at both the domestic and at the national level.

William Raeper claims that 'On larger political issues, MacDonald remained silent, at least in print' due to a feeling that 'politics was outside the sphere of the Church' (Raeper, 1988: 263). However, the level of political engagement in the Clearance narratives (such as *The Marquis of Lossie* and *What's Mine's Mine*) is unmistakable. In part, this can be explained by MacDonald's vision of the Highand Clearances as the result of failed paternalism, in which land move out of the control of clan chiefs and into the hands of the wealthy (if unprincipled) middle class. However, similar difficulties in Ireland were also attracting significant levels of media coverage, with General Gordon conveying his disgust at the manner in which the Irish people were being treated by parliament and landowners (Butler, 1899: 173). As the condition of Ireland deteriorated, MacDonald reluctantly admitted that the only possibility of resolution lay in 're-conquest, and fresh constitution', yet his sympathy towards the Irish people is clear (Sadler, 1994: 318). In 1886 he wrote to James MacDonald, declaring, 'the Irish have from the first been used abominable, and I confess to a great sympathy with the malcontents' (Sadler, 1994: 318). However, while he admits that 'They do well to be angry',

he asserts that they do 'very ill to be angry after such mean & cruel & unjust fashion' (Sadler, 1994: 318). Continuing the theme, this letter also discusses the imminent completion of the novel *What's Mine's Mine*, in which the romance narrative hinges around the death of patriarchal clan rule in the wake of the Clearances.

In *What's Mine's Mine*, the predicament of Clan Macruadh is explicitly linked to the contamination of paternalism with commercial interest. Noting the prevalence with which the value of land is attributed to 'the sheep it fed, and the grouse it might be brought to breed', MacDonald laments that 'a great hunger after larger means [...] had arisen in the land, and with it a rage for emigration' (MacDonald, 1886: I, 56). The causative factor (according to MacDonald) is the failure of the old patriarchal chiefs to uphold their duty as father to their tenants, selling the land and leaving them 'in the grasp of the selfish and greedy, the devourers of the poor' (MacDonald, 1886: III, 139). As rising living costs and loss of work fuels poverty in the Highlands, the laird (Alister Macruadh) declares, 'There is no way now for a chief to be the father of his people; we are all poor together!' (MacDonald, 1886: I, 48). MacDonald's familiar use of cannibalism to describe Capitalism (recalling Swift's satirical criticism of government policy in Ireland, *A Modest Proposal*) appears at first sight a contrast to Malcolm's 'divine end' for the fish, eaten to sustain the soldiers at Armageddon. However, while *What's Mine's Mine* is a clear depiction of the hardships suffered in Scotland and Ireland, it is far from being an incitement to rebellion. Instead, it describes the reassertion of paternalism through the rejection of materialism, encapsulated in Alistair's declaration that 'we are not bound to insist on our rights. We may decline to do so, and that way leave them to God to look after for us' (MacDonald, 1886: III, 209). Under the jurisdiction of magistrates in the pay of wealthy landowners, Clan Macruadh is forced to abandon its ancestral lands, culminating in a scene in which the clan members assert a desire or rebellion and violence. Demonstrating the strength of his leadership and faith, the laird and his brother pacify the clan, concluding that 'The wise thing is to submit to wrong' (MacDonald, 1886: III, 211). Together, they lead the impoverished and evicted Clan Macruadh to their promised settlement in Canada. Of course, the clan are later rewarded for their passivity when they strike oil in their new country, while the agent of their eviction (Mr. Palmer) is financially ruined.

The narrative of *What's Mine's Mine* is a similar (if more extreme) argument for submission to that seen in the 1876 *The Marquis of Lossie.* Under threat of eviction, starvation, poverty and imprisonment, the population of Scaurnose become 'like a hive about to swarm', rebelling against every symbol of authority under the assumption that each faction is against them (MacDonald, 1878: 256). In doing so they (like the factory workers in 'A Manchester Poem') fight so forcefully against their chains that they injure themselves. When Malcolm sends surveyors to repair and improve the harbour, the inhabitants take it as a potential threat, stoning the surveyors who are left to complain to the unsympathetic factor Mr. Crathie in Malcolm's place. Mr. Crathie in turn vows to 'empty every house in the place at Michaelmas' (MacDonald, 1878: 256).

Supported by constables, Mr. Crathie attempts to forcibly evict Blue Peter (a friend of Malcolm's). Although Blue Peter is determined to abide by the eviction – having decided not to 'resist the powers that were, believing them in some true sense [...] ordained of God' – his eviction becomes the focus point of the rebellion (MacDonald, 1878: 273). When Malcolm finally arrives in a chapter titled 'The Peacemaker', his response to the disturbance is revealing. Despite his horror at the predicament of the tenants (who are still unaware that Malcolm is the new Marquis), Malcolm does not take steps to intercede on their behalf, saying that 'the factor, although he had not justice, had law on his side, and could turn out whom he pleased' (MacDonald, 1878: 293). In fact, he only chastises Mr. Crathie twice during the uprising – the first time when the factor whips Malcolm's mare Kelpie, and the second time when he whips the idealised Annie Mair. The remainder of Malcolm's actions are to encourage passivity and quiescence amongst the fisher-folk, praising Blue Peter for his willingness to leave peacefully while condemning his neighbours for their resistance. However, despite Malcolm's apparent unwillingness to intercede, the rumour spreads around Scaurnose that 'in consequence of the punishment he had received from Malcolm, the factor was far too ill to be troublesome to any but his wife' (MacDonald, 1878: 293).

Although Malcolm's physical participation in the uprising is minimal, he is credited with the success, while the characterisation of his body articulates both authority and quiescence. In their desire to uphold the rights of paternalism – the moralised facade of the social hierarchy – both Malcolm MacPhail in *Malcolm* and Alister Macruadh in *What's Mine's Mine* fulfil the

role of father to their social collective, guiding their pupils in the fulfilment of their designated social role. Reinforcing the familiar correlation between father, teacher and clergyman, we are told that both 'the authority of the chief and the influence of the minister seemed to meet reborn in Alister', culminating in his brother's perception of him as 'the head of the family, uniting in himself all ancestral claims, the representative of an ordered and harmonious commonwealth' (MacDonald, 1886: I, 58; II, 60).

In *Thomas Wingfold, Curate*, *Malcolm*, *The Marquis of Lossie* and *What's Mine's Mine,* I have demonstrated how a failure of authority within the domestic structure is transmitted to a national level, emphasising the importance of the authority of the father within MacDonald's narratives. The hero's ability to reassert the balance of power therefore has implications both for the health of the nation, and for the portrayal of his own masculinity. In a similar situation, Harry Armstrong in *Adela Cathcart* finds himself tasked with rescuing Adela from a destructive domestic situation. While Colonel Cathcart initially appears harmless, even praising the manliness of the heroic doctor, his rejection of Harry as Adela's suitor (on grounds of his social position and lack of ancestry) demonstrates the material basis of his morality. Moreover, the Colonel's sense of superiority through ancestry is satirised by a servant, who complains that the Colonel might be 'the best master in the country [...] But he don't know what work is, *he don't*' (MacDonald, 1864a: I, 19). The comment recalls Ralph Armstrong's consideration that manliness is represented through the assumption of labour (whether ideological or physical), and calls the Colonel's right to masculine authority into question.

Like his status as a physically weakened and retired officer, the Colonel's belief in the supremacy of ancestry positions him as a character in decline, tied to outmoded social moeurs that leave him unable to appreciate or conform to a contemporary vision of the masculine social role. While capable of admiring Harry's physical masculinity, he regards him as a paid worker rather than a man of influence. When Harry first observes Adela professionally, the Colonel voices a suspicion that Harry means to earn his fee by playing the piano, saying 'If he thinks to come here and do that, he is mistaken' (MacDonald, 1864a: I, 103). In this statement, Colonel Cathcart not only ascribes a mercenary motive to the doctor, but also demonstrates ignorance over the nature of Adela's debilitation. His disruptive 'worldliness' is

confirmed towards the end of the narrative when a large investment fails, resulting in poverty and his own physical collapse.

Faced with conflict between her father and her suitor, Adela is left in the position of having to either disobey her father, or reject Harry. She eventually chooses Harry over her father, and her subsequent physical recovery confirms this as the correct choice for an individual in her domestic situation. Indeed, MacDonald advises us that Adela's cure is effected through a combination of inter-related factors, including 'Harry's prescriptions', 'the curate's sermons', 'falling in love with the doctor', 'her father's illness', 'the loss of their property' and 'the doctor's falling in love with her' (MacDonald, 1864a: III, 353). Harry's prescriptions, being stories that describe the enactment of gender-ideals and the social situations that evoke them, act as her signposts towards the recognition and enactment of laudable social behaviours. Ralph Armstrong's sermons relocate these stories to a biblical framework, allowing her to associate the behaviours that inspire social approbation with the behaviours advocated in the Bible. Together, these factors contribute to the awakening of spiritual and emotional sensitivity (indicated by her tears and laughter during both sermons and stories). This, combined with an abrupt shift in her domestic hierarchy, results in a return to physical health that is symbolised by her ability to accept Harry Armstrong's proposal.

The curing influence of Adela's marriage echoes the theories of John Rutherford Russell in *The History and Heroes of the Art of Medicine,* who asserts that many female illnesses are the result of love, and can only be cured by the object of their affection (Rutherford Russell, 1861: 22). Indeed, MacDonald's indebtedness to Russell is indicated by his decision to dedicate the 1864 *Adela Cathcart* to the noted homeopath. Despite Ralph Armstrong's abilities as a spiritual healer, it is only her future husband that can restore Adela to full health. Furthermore, Russell laments that 'there must now be many sufferers from this complaint undergoing daily examination with stethoscopes, and all the ingenious modern substitutes for the discerning eye which sees at a glance what no science will ever reveal' (Rutherford Russell, 1861: 22). In *Adela Cathcart*, the 'discerning eye' is threefold: Harry Armstrong perceives her spiritual malady, but it is the narrator John Smith (and through him, the reader) who sees the possibility of love between doctor and patient, and recognises this as a potential cure. As Russell intimates, where medical intervention fails to cure Adela, marriage

eventually succeeds – however, MacDonald deviates from Russell's prescriptions when he notes the healing attributes of 'her father's illness' and 'the loss of their property'. In this deviation, MacDonald steps away from his friend's medical theory and returns to his exposition of contemporary masculinity with 'The Castle' – a parable originally attributed to Ralph Armstrong but told by the Schoolmaster Mr. Bloomfield. Like 'The Broken Swords', 'The Castle' presents a dilemma facing the construction of masculine identity, this time within the domestic sphere rather than the battlefield. Describing the origins and resolution of an authority conflict within the home, 'The Castle' portrays the immediate foundation of the discord between Harry Armstrong and the Colonel, and narrates the process of reformation for a stable patriarchy.

Deeply infused with biblical references, 'The Castle' parallels the Christian population with a family of brothers and sisters, situating them within a domestic sphere that doubles as a spiritual domain. This spiritual castle is owned by their absent father, who has left behind a series of rules – foremost of these being to 'obey their eldest brother, and listen to his councils' (MacDonald, 1864a: III, 287). However, the unreasoning nature of their brother's will causes them to resent the 'secret feeling that they ought to be subject to him', leading them to rebel against his authority and imprison him in a dungeon (MacDonald, 1864a: III, 288). With their eldest brother incarcerated, the brothers and sisters (believing themselves free) become slaves to their own hedonistic impulses. Losing all individuality and self-consciousness, they become a 'plastic mass of living form' that exists, not at the will and law of their father (or elder brother), but rather at the 'will and law of the music' (MacDonald, 1864a: III, 298). Only their escaped brother is able to remove the 'common transfusing spirit' to leave them 'Broken into individuals' (MacDonald, 1864a: III, 298). Stripped of their hedonistic veneer, the brothers and sisters stand 'drenched, cold, and benumbed' before broken windows in the midst of a storm (MacDonald, 1864a: III, 298). Without the protection of their 'castle' (a protection derived from obedience to the will of their brother and father) they are exposed to the same harsh elements as those who live outside their family.

Like the rebelling workers in 'A Manchester Poem', the brothers and sisters find that their self-destructive attempt at liberation is painfully curbed. However, the lesson is learned on both sides, and the Elder Brother begins to temper his manner, assuming the role of teacher

rather than autocrat. Soon, the brothers and sisters find that 'With the subordination came increase of freedom' (MacDonald, 1864a: III, 303). By obeying their brother's wish that they 'give up trifling with earnest things,' they begin to unravel the mysteries of their home and their father, and their spiritual development is reflected in the tone of their voices: 'The voices of the men were deeper, and yet seemed by their very depth more feminine than before; while the voices of the women were softer and sweeter, and at the same time more full and decided' (MacDonald, 1864a: III, 304). In the same way that 'The Broken Swords' provides a basis for MacDonald's construction of the morally-defined male body in 1854, 'The Castle' provides a platform for MacDonald to expound upon the nature of the contemporary male domestic role, and the mechanism of the obedience / authority paradigm. Moreover, its position within *Adela Cathcart* allows MacDonald to describe the duties incumbent upon patriarchal authority, and the consequences of its failure.

Despite his martial history, Colonel Cathcart is confused by the form of patriarchy articulated in 'The Castle'. He admits that his masculine education is incomplete, saying 'I believe I have done my duty by my king and country, but a man has to learn a good deal after all that is over and done with' (MacDonald, 1864a: III, 315). As a soldier, the Colonel has learned the necessity for unquestioning control and obedience, and appears to expect the same obedience from his daughter. Unreconciled to the concept of Harry as Adela's suitor, Colonel Cathcart is unable to accept the loss of his own domestic control. Whereas the Elder Brother in 'The Castle' loses domestic control through perceived harshness and unwillingness to compromise, the Colonel loses patriarchal control through his inability to recognise contemporary masculine values, which results in his uncompromising rejection of Harry. Similarly, just as the Elder Brother learns to temper his manner following imprisonment, so Colonel Cathcart learns to accept his changed status following the failure of his investments and collapse of his health. Rendered both physically and financially dependent, Adela's father is left with no option but to entrust the financial management of his home, and his own physical health, to his daughter's fiancé, transferring domestic authority into Harry Armstrong's hands.

Within *Adela Cathcart* 'The Castle', like 'The Broken Swords', articulates a particular aspect of contemporary manliness. While the physical development of the protagonist in 'The

Broken Swords' constructs manliness within the context of civic obedience and feminine defence, the religious patriarchy of 'The Castle' relates domestic authority to faith and social harmony. The reader's understanding of contemporary masculinity develops in tandem with Adela's growing realisation of her need for a contemporary domestic authority figure. As such, Harry Armstrong's masculine status is proven in the strength of his body, and in his ability to rescue Adela from the damaging consequences of an ineffective patriarchy. Just as the eldest brother enforces the authority of his father in 'The Castle', Harry Armstrong promotes both patriarchal authority and social cohesion by 'curing' Adela's social network, thereby allowing her to slip back into the role of domestic obedience.

In *A Man's Place*, Tosh describes a cultural assumption that social cohesion was reliant upon adherence to the hierarchy of domestic authority, however the conflict between Harry Armstrong and Colonel Cathcart demonstrates that in MacDonald's narratives this is only the case where authority is imposed by a competent and stable patriarch – one able not only to regulate his own behaviour, but one who is equally able to assume regulatory authority over other members of his social collective. The Colonel's 'worldliness' is reflected in his willingness to participate in risky investments, which results in the loss of the family fortune. His lack of self-regulation provides Adela with the justification she needs to rebel, and permits Harry's intervention. In effect, Harry supplants the Colonel's position of paternal authority, establishing himself as her husband and her healer, but also (metaphorically) as her father. Within the final section of this chapter, I shall examine the prevalent association between the roles of husband and father, drawing attention to the processes of education that allow both men and women to assume their idealised states.

Teaching Manliness

The process of curing Adela Cathcart is repeated many times in MacDonald's narratives, apparently criticising the poor quality of women's education while simultaneously upholding the manly identity of the individual able to cure her.[119] In *The Portent* (1864) the visionary tutor Duncan is able to manage Lady Alice's education to the extent that she is revealed as an

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[119] For a full discussion relating to women's education from the perspective of Adela Cathcart and other narratives, see Chapter 6: Unmuscular Christianity – Obfuscating Femininity.

intelligent and capable woman, initially frustrating the plans of her relatives to have her declared insane in order to steal her property (MacDonald, 1864b). In many ways, the novel is an early precursor to the 1883 *Donal Grant*, in which the protagonist likewise accepts the role of tutor to a wealthy aristocratic family. In this position, Donal Grant attains direct influence over a boy's academic, moral and spiritual development – yet his vocation extends beyond his salaried position when Lady Arctura insists upon observing her young cousin's lessons. Indirectly, Donal is thereby able to observe and influence Arctura's spiritual and social education. His situation within her domestic circle is therefore implicitly one of authority that (like that of Harry Armstrong) parallels, and is eventually displaced by, his eventual status as Actura's husband.

Donal soon perceives that Arctura suffers (like Adela and Alice) from a spiritual malady consequent to poor religious education. His solution is to allow her to observe her cousin's lessons on the New Testament, replacing her impression of a cruel and unjust God with the image of a loving Father. The parallel between Arctura's domestic situation and her theological position is marked. Just as Donal rescues Arctura from the vision of a cruel God, so does he rescue her from life under the control of a violent uncle intent on stealing her property through either murder, or through a compelled marriage to his own illegitimate son. In both instances, the unjust patriarch is removed from his position of influence, being replaced with a stable authority figure.[120] Healed with words, Arctura's cure is communicated when she finds herself able to fall in love with a 'true' man who embodies the simultaneous roles of defender, teacher, healer and preacher. The patriarchal nature of Donal's role is emphasised at the point of their marriage, when the dying Arctura exclaims, 'How could I but love you [...] You have been like another father to me!' (MacDonald, 1883: III, 273). However, while Arctura's spiritual reform is a success, the closure of the narrative is deeply unsatisfying from a modern perspective, in terms of both the romantic plot and the crime plot.

Donal Grant is an exceedingly disturbing gothic narrative that surely owes its creation to the fairy-tale character Blue Beard – and, like many versions of that fairy-tale, allows the murderer to escape trial. Despite the discovery of two dead bodies (a mother and child) sealed in a secret room of the castle, and despite seeing Arctura's uncle (Lord Morven) confess to

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[120] Arctura's domestic situation is examined more fully in Chapter 6: Unmuscular Christianity – Obfuscating Femininity and Chapter 7: Urban Environments, Sexuality and Domestic Control.

the murder of his lover, Donal considers himself duty-bound (as an employee) to remain silent, deciding that 'he did not feel sure it would be right to carry a report of the house where he held a position of trust' (MacDonald, 1883: II, 19). As such, the murder is kept secret – even from Lord Morven's illegitimate son. More astonishingly, when Lord Morven repeats his actions – chaining Arctura to a bed and forcing her to lie on top of his lover's remains – he is left to die peacefully, without legal intervention, believing himself forgiven by his murdered lover and tortured niece.

After these occurrences, Arctura becomes almost incidental to the plot, and indeed, even she describes herself as 'the paper of a parcel' (MacDonald, 1883: II, 173). Following their marriage – which places Donal (at least temporarily) in control of her estate – Arctura succumbs to an ankle injury and dies. However, her death is irrelevant to the closure of the narrative, which triumphs in Donal's display of wisdom as both landowner and widowed patriarch. Deciding to reject the inheritance of his wife's property, Donal instead chooses to ensure its transmission to a moral and legitimate scion of Lord Morven's family, and resumes the position of teacher – becoming a moral and spiritual father (or 'a present power of heat and light') for the entire community as he had previously been for the ruling family (MacDonald, 1883: III; 313). Concluding the narrative, the narrator comments that 'The few wise souls in the neighbourhood know Donal as the heart of the place', and admits that while Donal had few pupils (due to his 'odd' ideas of education), 'if a boy stayed, or rather if he allowed him to stay with him long enough, he was sure to turn out a gentleman' (MacDonald, 1883: III, 311).

Donal Grant's position as tutor is at once one of economic necessity and one of symbolic importance. Many of MacDonald's young protagonists assume (often unsatisfactory) positions as tutors to wealthy middle class or aristocratic families – a fact readily accounted for by MacDonald's own experience as tutor to the Radermacher family in 1845, and later to the Powell family (where he met his cousin and future wife Louisa Powell) (Raeper, 1988: 56). In truth, such experience was far from uncommon to the poorer class of students who, while gaining partial scholarships to attend university yet found themselves in need of summer and winter positions to finance the coming term. It was also a frequent choice for those who were unwilling to abandon 'gentlemanly' employment, yet were undecided about

their choice of future career. As such, the role of tutor in MacDonald's narratives frequently represents a period of transition between the states of childhood and manliness – the one a state of domestic obedience and economic dependence; the other a state of domestic authority and economic, social or spiritual success. The educative role therefore also encompasses the development of the educator, culminating in the assumption of the literal or figurative paternal role.

Concerned with the transference of civic responsibility and gentlemanly behaviour, the role of the teacher is a pivotal one that is readily subsumed into the paternalist hierarchy. When Arctura refers to Donal Grant as 'another father', she echoes the assertion in the 1863 *David Elginbrod* that the protagonist's relationship to his spiritual master is close to that of father and son (MacDonald, 1863: I, 130). In both instances, the paternal relationship confirms the ability of the teacher to instil his pupils with a moral compass and religious ideals, whether through the medium of mathematics, classics or poetry. Gifted with authority over the spiritual direction of young men and women, the teacher becomes a moral and spiritual guide in MacDonald's narratives. The fatherly heart of the 'enlightened' community in the Thomas Wingfold narratives is Mr. Polwarth, whose gentle criticism inspires Wingfold's religious transformation. In *Malcolm* and *The Marquis of Lossie,* the teacher is Alexander Graham (the 'stickit minister'). Removed from his position as schoolmaster on grounds of unorthodoxy, Alexander Graham yet preaches quiescence and obedience to the 'decree of heaven' as represented in the will of the presbytery (MacDonald, 1875b: III, 137). His obedience is soon rewarded. In London, Alexander Graham becomes a successful non-denominational preacher, finally succeeding in the social ambition he had earlier failed to achieve. His impact on the London community is profound, culminating in his spiritual reformation of the kind-hearted but foolish Lady Clementina into a woman capable of practical philanthropy, 'worthy' of becoming Malcolm's wife thanks to her new understanding that some forms of suffering (and punishment) are necessary.[121]

In *Alec Forbes of Howglen,* the fallible Mr. Cupples describes that the process of moral and practical development that transforms failing 'boys' into manly 'men'. He declares that learning to 'refuse the evil and chowse the guid' is 'pairt o' the edication o' the human

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[121] See Chapter 7: Urban Environments, Sexuality and Domestic Control.

individual' (MacDonald, 1865b: III, 135; 134). In doing so, he echoes F.D. Maurice's claim that 'the true education surely is that which assumes that every boy and every man has need to conquer his selfish nature, to rise out of it, to acquire the true humanity' (Maurice, 1866: 188). Education therefore becomes the active promotion of a 'true humanity' that is predicated on the need to uphold a paternalist hierarchy within both the family and within society as a whole.

Chad Schrock describes MacDonald's narratives of development as tripartite cycles, whereby the child passes through a harrowing education in order to return to 'something that resembles the original uneducated simplicity in preparation for future growth' (Schrock, 2006: 59). However, far from reaching their perfection in 'uneducated simplicity', in most instances MacDonald's male characters absorb the educational principles established by their teachers, and utilise these principles to defuse instances of violence, rebellion, prostitution or poverty through adherence to the traditional domestic patriarchy. This social education forms an integral part of MacDonald's narrative of development, which not only culminates in the re-establishment of authority as a masculine duty, but also enforces the need to communicate these lessons to struggling pupils. Therefore, the domestic hierarchy of masculinity becomes a co-dependent relationship equally reliant on the willingness of the son to obey/learn, and on the ability of the father to command obedience/teach.

While many of MacDonald's works (in common with those of Maurice and Ruskin) appear to assume the natural capacity for the middle class to educate the poor, the development of MacDonald's tutor-protagonists allows him to demonstrate the need for an education in the principles of education. When Hugh Sutherland is introduced to the plot of *David Elginbrod* as a poor student, financing his final years at university by tutoring the children of a noble family, MacDonald asserts a clear contrast between standardised and naturalised forms of education. At the outset, Hugh (despite his status as tutor) is far from being a natural teacher. Although he has an extensive theoretical understanding of his subjects, he is unable to see the sublime root of the knowledge, and therefore unable to interest or influence his pupils – a situation that is exacurbated by his employer's failure to perceive that religion is a necessary aspect of the teacher-pupil relationship. As such, we are told that he is paid to teach 'Caesar and Virgil, Algebra and Euclid; food upon which intellectual babes are reared to the stature of

college youths,' yet 'except during school-hours, he was expected to take no charge whatever of his pupils. They ran wild all other times; which was far better, in every way, both for them and for him' (MacDonald, 1863: I, 30). While paid to tutor the household children in academic subjects, Hugh is neither expected nor qualified to teach them on a spiritual level. They do not learn manliness or religion from him, and the superficiality of his teachings is emphasised by his failure to maintain a position of authority.

The desire of Hugh's employers to separate the concepts of religion and education, together with Hugh's inability to provide his pupils with 'spiritual food', results in his position as tutor being undermined. Indeed, his relationship with his pupils becomes one governed by contracts, obligation and remuneration, transforming the sublime educative role with a purely material occupation. In contrast, the teacher-pupil relationship between Hugh Sutherland and David Elginbrod is non-contractual, being based on friendship and mutual respect. In the absence of financial concerns, they assume a relationship according to a domestic model, permitting the moral and spiritual influence that Hugh had been unable to assert over his younger students. Despite appearing as the pupil within the student-teacher hierarchy (due to his lack of formal education), David soon demonstrates that he is 'immeasurably nearer to the stars than Hugh Sutherland,' having a purer understanding of the purpose of education and its relationship to spirituality (MacDonald, 1863: I, 41). MacDonald informs us that 'Life intelligently met and honestly passed, is the best education of all; except that higher one to which it is intended to lead, and to which it had led David' (MacDonald, 1863: I, 49).

While Hugh possesses the academic qualifications to be a teacher within society, the 'uneducated' David uses the influence of a 'life intelligently met and honestly passed' to demonstrate the practical and moral implications of knowledge, inevitably guiding each educative discipline back to a Christian origin. When David wishes to learn mathematics, he explains 'I unnerstan' weel eneuch hoo to measur' lan', an' that kin' o' thing. I jist follow the rule' (MacDonald, 1863: I, 50). However, for David, simply knowing 'the rule' is insufficient, and he explains 'it seems to me that the best o' a rule is, no to mak ye able to do a thing, but to lead ye to what maks the rule richt--to the prenciple o' the thing' (MacDonald, 1863: I, 50), This is the point at which Hugh and David differ – through the advantage of 'life intelligently met and honestly passed', David not only obeys the rules, but understands the

principles of behind the rules of his life. While Hugh's education allows him to provide 'food upon which intellectual babes are reared to the stature of college youths,' David's allows him to provide food upon which the college youth is reared to the stature of a Man (MacDonald, 1863: I, 17). David Elginbrod's desire to learn the principles of mathematics and Euclid from Hugh allows him to teach the young student the 'divine' principles of education. Indeed, in *David Elginbrod* the classical education of university is almost antagonistic to David's 'divine' education. Not only are we told that intellectual teaching could not 'outweigh heart-kindness, and spiritual impulse and enlightenment,' but Hugh's education at David's hands is finally interrupted by the need to finance his university education – a decision for which the narrator criticises Hugh, saying that 'anxious thoughts for the future' compelled him to turn 'away through lack of faith' (MacDonald, 1863: I, 137). This point is reinforced when the 'financially rewarding' employment that Hugh leaves David for almost leads to his ruin, indicating that the young tutor would have been better served by refusing university and cleaving to his 'father'.

Through his paternalist relationship to Hugh, David is able to communicate the concept of education as a divine principle, and as a way of ascertaining the natural order and rule of the universe. Hugh's new understanding and respect for the principle of education, especially when he begins to instruct David's daughter Margaret (Hugh's future wife) on the principles of mathematics, leads him to approach his position with the laird's family in a sublime rather than contractual manner. While he had previously 'succeeded in interesting his boy-pupils in their studies' his new approach helps them to understand their lessons, and MacDonald comments that 'in proportion to the beauty and value of the thing understood, to understand is to enjoy' (MacDonald, 1863: I, 56). Through Hugh's newfound ability to educate, his social status as a teacher increases, and the laird and lady 'consequently began not only to prize Hugh's services, but to think more highly of his office than had been their wont' (MacDonald, 1863: I, 56). Therefore, through his experience of the teacher/student relationship as a paternalist, sublime connection rather than a contracted employment, Hugh receives the reward of increased social standing and peer recognition that is rapidly internalised, and reflected in the developing manliness of his body. Hugh's 'natural' development at Turriepuffit is positioned against an agricultural backdrop that balances the ripening of corn in the natural world with Hugh's 'ripening' manliness. When the plot opens in the spring-time, Hugh is comparable to 'green corn', yet by autumn, Hugh has 'watched the green corn

grow, and ear, and turn dim; then brighten to yellow, and ripen at last' – a developmental change that is mirrored in Hugh's developing maturity (MacDonald, 1863: I, 118).

The metaphor of the growing seed reappears a number of times in the novel. When David expands on the nature of education to Hugh, he makes explicit the narrator's metaphor of developing corn, saying 'We ken no more [...] what we're growin' til than that neep-seed there kens what a neep is, though a neep it will be' (MacDonald, 1863: I, 281). In his role as tutor, Hugh later expands on this concept to argue that particular types of seed will develop in particular ways, with each variety growing towards its own species-defined ideal. It is a principle that Hugh tries to convey to Davie (his pupil) in the months after leaving Turriepuffit. Using the example of a snow-drop seed, Hugh describes the way in which its patient acquiescence – 'It's all right; I will be what I can' – fuels a manner of development natural to its kind. It 'yielded to the wind, drooped its head to the earth', and is rewarded by a lessening of both wind and pain, since 'the flower knew that it was the holding of its head up that had hurt it so' (MacDonald, 1863: I, 284). The parallel of flower to human is reinforced at the close of the story, with the appearance of 'a pale, sad-looking girl' who kills the flower by picking it (MacDonald, 1863: I, 285). However, we are told that it 'was a heavenly death for a snowdrop; for had it not cast a gleam of summer [...] upon the heart of a sick girl?' (MacDonald, 1863: I, 285). In fulfilling its philanthropic duty by acquiescing to the sick girl, the flower discovers that 'all the rest it needed was to hang its head after its nature' (MacDonald, 1863: I, 285).

This concept of a natural development, each to their own kind, is echoed by the assertions of Hector Macallaster in *Gutta Percha Willie* that each individual should fulfil their allotted role in the divine 'business' (MacDonald, 1873: 51).[122] David's understanding of mathematics as the understanding of natural and divine 'laws' fuels Hugh's concept of human development, resulting in his depiction of a snowdrop and a sick girl suffering until they learn to submit to their natural development. Similarly, Hugh Sutherland suffers until he is able to submit to his true nature as 'man'. Rather than borrowing from the imagery of the suffering, submissive snowdrop, Hugh's masculine growth is communicated through the growth of the strong,

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[122] This principle is repeated numerous times in MacDonald's narratives, most strikingly in Malcolm's description of fishing as analogous to Armageddon (wherein each man and creature must fulfil its allotted role). See page 144.

productive and economically valuable corn: 'Most graceful of all hung those delicate oats; next bowed the bearded barley; and stately and wealthy and strong stood the few fields of wheat, of a rich, ruddy, golden hue' (MacDonald, 1863: I, 119). The adjectives describing the wheat – stately, wealthy, strong – mimic Hugh's masculine status at the harvest: he lacks the wisdom of the 'delicate oats' (which although near death hold the capacity to renew life), just as he lacks the experience of the 'bearded barley'. Instead, he has the capacity for stateliness, wealth and strength that are the prerogative of the young 'man' – holding power while yet lacking the true understanding and paternal relationships that lead to masculine authority. His power and strength are demonstrated at harvest when, despite being 'quite helpless at the sickle' he proves fully capable (with David's assistance) of wielding the scythe, and by the close of harvest is able to rival the speed of every seasoned (but uneducated and low-born) man in the village, with the exception of David (MacDonald, 1863: I, 120; 124; 128).

Interestingly, the other field-hands presuppose a relationship between Hugh's success on the field and his middle class origins. When one of then finally challenges him, MacDonald explains the challenge is made due to the apparent unfairness of Hugh being able enter their 'world' and excel at their skills, while also claiming an 'unfair' advantage over the idealised Margaret Elginbrod's affections (MacDonald, 1863: I, 124). The implication of the field-hands is that Hugh has in some manner overstepped the boundaries of his class position, yet under the influence of David's teachings (and his developing physical strength in the field) we see his capability as instead a reflection of his growth towards true manliness. By allowing us to follow the Hugh's development towards physical and spiritual manliness, *David Elginbrod* (like *Alec Forbes of Howglen*) becomes an educative narrative for both the protagonist and the implied reader, with the narrator (and implicitly author) assuming the position of teacher to the social consciousness.

Naomi Wood describes MacDonald's relationship towards his readers as a rather uncomfortable one that blends the roles of teacher, father and preacher in a heavily dictatorial instruction on moral development. In doing so, she draws attention to the implicit power dynamic asserted between the narrator and the reader – one that MacDonald himself likened to the relationship of a father to his children (Wood, 1993: 113; 116). This relationship is fully revealed in *The Seaboard Parish* (1868), where MacDonald uses realist techniques to

assert not only the educational relationship between narrator and reader, but also the moral and material qualities expected of each party.

The narrator's first task is to blend the concepts of religion and education, stating that 'whatever I say or write will more or less take the shape of a sermon; and if you had not by this time learned at least to bear with my oddities, you would not have wanted any more of my teaching' (MacDonald, 1868a: I, 1). Throughout these opening pages, MacDonald's narrator addresses the implied reader as an unknowable audience, and proceeds to characterise them according to his fancy, pre-supposing the age, gender and moral condition of his readership and thereby identifying his intended students. Despite acknowledging that his readership is comprised of 'multitudes of people whom I cannot see or hear', he states that the sense of a reader's presence allows him 'to speak them more truly, as man to man' (MacDonald, 1868a: I, 2).

This first assumption of the masculinity of his reader informs us that the narrative is intended specifically to educate men, while its classification as 'sermon' advises us that the education will be spiritual in nature. The quality of this education is then communicated by an explanation as to the mission of the author, who rationalises that he 'must have suitable regard to the desires of my children. It is a fine thing to be able to give people what they want, if at the same time you can give them what you want. To give people what they want, would sometimes be to give them only dirt and poison. To give them what you want might be to set before them something of which they could not eat a mouthful' (MacDonald, 1868a: I, 2). Through this apparently simple principle, the narrator (and MacDonald) asserts both his right and capacity to teach. He sets his lessons in opposition to the 'dirt and poison' that he presumes some readers (or 'children') will desire, indicating that the lessons he communicates will be both clean and healthful. This assertion (taken in conjunction with his definition of his narrative as a 'sermon') indicates that he, the narrator, is in possession of spiritual authority over specifically other men. Next, however, he makes the assumption that the man he is teaching will be receptive to the lesson, saying 'What both you and I want, I am willing to think, is a dish of good wholesome venison' (MacDonald, 1868a: I, 2). As such, while making the appearance of cooperation with his readership, he confirms the dictatorial,

hierarchical structure of the relationship between developed (or developing) man and undeveloped man – whether they be teacher and student, or father and son.

With the age and gender of the student established, MacDonald next makes a case for claiming that educative authority is the natural prerogative of the old, since they are able to 'see things right, to disentangle confusions, and judge righteous judgement,' appearing to suggest that moral righteousness (or 'true masculinity') is dependent upon age (MacDonald, 1868a: I, 3). However, within the space of a paragraph he contradicts this apparent philosophy by asserting that masculinity is instead dependent upon the generation in which a man lives. He acknowledges that old men 'have strange tales, that we know to be true [...] only somehow they do not belong to the ways of this year' (MacDonald, 1868a: I, 4). He concludes that 'the old man must ever be ready [...] to get on his tottering old legs, and go with brave heart to do the work of a true man,' carefully separating the masculine status of 'old man' and 'true man' (MacDonald, 1868a: I, 6). This is confirmed when he warns that 'we shall never do aright after ceasing to understand the new generation. We are not the men, neither shall wisdom die with us' (MacDonald, 1868a: I, 7). Therefore, while old men may do the work of 'true men', they are not 'the men' of the present generation. While the old narrator of *The Seaboard Parish* does not claim to be 'a man', except in relation to his supposedly undeveloped students, the closeness of narration blurs the line between author and narrator, with the effect that philosophies of the 44-year-old MacDonald are endowed with the apparent wisdom of the aged patriarch. From this perspective, the meal of 'good, wholesome venison' that is seemingly offered by an old man to a young student – each one step either side of 'true manliness' – instead provides a confirmation of natural authority from one patriarch to his contemporaries.

To an extent, MacDonald admits that all of his narratives have an educational purpose, yet the education in question is vastly different from that of the educational establishment; its focus is not on maths, chemistry, literature or history, but rather on a social obedience and religious faith that mimics even as it overlays the domestic hierarchy. To this degree, MacDonald's novels are aligned with the principles of the Working Men's (and Women's) colleges, teaching adherence to class- and gender- defined behaviours in the cause of social unity. In the relationship of the tutor to his struggling pupil, we see displaced the individual

relationship of a father to a child, or of the philanthropist to an impoverished and rebellious working class.

Having established the development of the male domestic identity through the roles of son, husband and father (or teacher), we see how male authority in the home is presented as both a divine right and a national necessity. Within the next chapter, we focus on the urban environment as a platform for individual and national reform, observing the intrusion of the amoral city on a previously rural and domestic homeland. Furthermore, we examine the role of the 'manly' man within this environment, and at the corrective influences of the 'father' as an agent of inner-city reform.

Chapter 4: Men in the City – Victims and Reformers

Previously, I argued that there was a deep, cultural need to define the characteristics of manly identity in the mid-Victorian era – a need that rose out of a climate of rapid technological and societal change, precipitating a breakdown in the relationship between political power and the traditional signifiers of manliness. This in turn resulted in an atmosphere of great uncertainty, both on a social level and on an individual level. In this chapter, I investigate MacDonald's representation of the city as a place of cultural estrangement and individual uncertainty – a fairy-land that, as Jeffrey Smith comments, provides a platform for MacDonald's 'concerns regarding the turbulent working conditions in London' (Smith, 2013: 69), yet which doubles as the centre of individual psychological conflict. Sedgwick notes that the 'critical consensus' is primarily interested 'in the Gothic on "private" terms and in mainstream Victorian fictions on "public" terms', yet she argues that 'just as the psychological harrowings of the Gothic are meaningful only as moves in a public discourse of power allocation, so the overtly public, ideological work of writers like Tennyson, Thackeray, and Eliot needs to be explicated in the supposedly intrapsychic terms of desire and phobia to make even its political outlines clear' (Sedgwick, 1993: 118). Within MacDonald's earlier urban narratives, this tension between the "public" and the "private" is palpable, as MacDonald's characters search for self-identity and masculine-identity in an almost predatory environment stripped of social moeurs. The urban threats to individuality and manliness are manifold, ranging from over-crowding and poor housing to crime and prostitution. Repeatedly, we see the antithesis of manliness presented in the form of a doppelganger such as the Ash Tree in *Phantastes*, Herr von Funkelstein in *David Elginbrod* or Patrick Beauchamp in *Alec Forbes of Howglen* – doppelgangers that initially disgust the protagonists of each novel, yet who swiftly overpower their weakened identities with the temptations of the alien environment. As such, there remains an almost erotic tension – an exploration of the forbidden – between MacDonald's male protagonists and their doppelgangers. Sedgwick describes such a tension as an expression of René Girard's 'erotic triangle' (Girard, 1972; Sedgwick, 1993), wherein the rivalry between two competing suitors forms a bond that is stronger than that formed with the object of their desire. As Girard presupposes, such a tension in MacDonald's novels is soon redirected towards a sexualised female body, who thereafter becomes an emblem of lost identity and urban corruption, her selfhood overwritten as it becomes a mere proxy for the hero's narrative of spiritual fall and redemption. These narratives are therefore at root a

psychological search for identity, yet they are not purely, or even primarily, introspective.[123] Instead, we see individual experience and psychological conflict mapped against a backdrop of urbanisation that allows MacDonald to explore the impact of the city on manly identity, and through this, on the fabric of Victorian society.

Jeffrey Smith notes that MacDonald's treatment of the city owes greatly to the work of Romantic poets such as William Wordsworth (Smith, 2012: 19), for whom the pastoralisation of the rural environment was backed by a transcendental world view. This allowed the conflict between country and city to be portrayed as a conflict between spirituality and industry, while likewise portraying country, spirit and individual identity alike as the victims of the spreading metropolis. As such, identity and faith become mapped onto a cityscape that in MacDonald's narratives, as in those of contemporaries such as Charles Dickens, Elizabeth Gaskell and the later Thomas Hardy, yet imbibes the tensions of the mid-Victorian urban environment. Smith argues that MacDonald saw 'Union with God' as the result of 'seeking harmony with Nature' combined with the prioritisation of divine service 'as opposed to obligatory service to others' (Smith, 2012: 19). However, by the mid-half of the 1860s we begin to notice the equally powerful influence of John Ruskin, whose diatribes against urbanisation in texts such as *Past and Present, Unto this Last* and *Fors Clavigera* led to the foundation of St. George's Company (later The Guild of St. George) in 1871.[124] Indeed, in many ways the year 1867 acts as a watershed in MacDonald's writings of the relationship between the city and his representations of manliness. In the summer of 1867, he and his family holidayed in Bude, Cornwall along with Octavia Hill, who at this time was exhausted from her work on tenancy projects at Paradise Place and Freshwater Place. On their return, the MacDonald family relocated to Hammersmith and became intimately involved in Hill's work, putting on regular entertainments in the form of parties, plays, sermons or stories. Many of London's prominent political and literary campaigners joined them at these events; inevitably John Ruskin, but also Pre-Raphaelite artists such as Edward Burne-Jones, Arthur

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[123] There have been many psychoanalytical critiques of works such as *Phantastes*, ranging from Robert Lee Wolff's *The Golden Key* (Wolff, 1961) to David Holbrook's 'A Study of George MacDonald and the Image of Woman' (Holbrook, 2000). William Raeper (Raeper, 1988) and Rolland Hein (Hein, 1999) likewise note elements of autobiography (and introspection) within his works, yet over-reliance on 'the biographical heresy' (Gallagher, 2009: 126) leads us to overlook symbols and themes that speak more to the cultural environment than to individual experience.

[124] St. George's Company was a hierarchical guild that came to be part of the Arts and Crafts Movement of the 1880s. It was established with the aim of challenging the progressive industrialisation of Victorian Britain, and in doing so, improving the health and spiritual wellbeing of his society. It was inspired by medieval craft guilds and by Venetian art and architecture (such as that outlined in his *Stones of Venice*).

Hughes and Alexander Munro.[125] Furthermore, it was in 1867 that MacDonald began to feel serious concern regarding the state of the country, and wrote to Louisa documenting his desire to do 'my poor part' (Raeper, 1988: 266). From this moment, MacDonald's narratives embrace the city in a different way. These narratives unfold under the eyes of an omniscient narrator – MacDonald himself acting as the ultimate patriarch. Observing the interactions of the urban environment, he directs our sympathies, even while presenting a dichotomous view of the poor as victims requiring help, and as a monstrous, collective body that must be contained. Far from facing crises of identity within an alienating vortex, the protagonists of novels such as *Robert Falconer*, *At the Back of the North Wind* and *Sir Gibbie* act under the gaze of the narrator to confront the social injustices of urbanisation, whether through spiritual reform, education or compassionate example.[126] As such, even where these characters do not become social 'leaders' or patriarchs (as Robert Falconer does), they focus attention on the practical reform of the urban environment by way of individual action, rather than social change.

Urban Fairy-lands

The introduction of the urban environment in MacDonald's novels is presented as a process of cultural alienation, in which characters are transported as strangers into an unfamiliar social setting, or in which they find themselves lost in a fantasy world. The settings of these environments are almost Gothic in character, expressing social tensions in an intensely psychological manner as individual identity is fragmented across a multiplicity of new images, new view-points, and new cultural threats. Jean Webb observes that MacDonald's protagonists begin to enter 'new worlds and explorations of the self and society' (Webb, 2007: 1), while Maria Nikolajeva goes further to describe MacDonald's use of fantasy as 'a strategy aimed at the utmost estrangement of the experience of the fictive characters from that of the narratee and the implied reader' (Nikolajeva, 2007: 85). This sense of loss, uncertainty, plurality and almost paradoxical familiarity is most clearly captured in *Phantastes*, when Anodos wakes from his bed to find himself in fairy land.

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[125] William Morris's daughters Jane and Mary (May) also became close friends, and while there is little evidence of contact between MacDonald and William Morris, the connections between the two families are so substantial that it seems inconceivable that MacDonald and Morris were not on friendly terms. For a detailed overview of the links between the MacDonald family and William Morris, see (Salmon, 1997).

[126] Queen Victoria was so impressed with the novel *Robert Falconer* that she gave a copy to each of her grandsons (Hein, 1999: 399).

Phantastes, like 'The Broken Swords' and *Within & Without*, has an intensely individualised focus; its first-person narration combined with frequent references to English and German Romanticism, invites psychoanalytical interpretations.[127] Nevertheless, *Phantastes* distinguishes itself from MacDonald's other early works by introducing a wide range of cultural caricatures to the protagonist's psychological landscape. The most overt of these are the fairies, who entertain themselves with 'mimicries of grown people, and mock solemnities' (MacDonald, 1858: 23). When Anodos encounters them for the first time, he witnesses the interactions between 'garden fairies' and their 'country cousins', noting that the 'garden fairies' are 'more staid and educated than those of the fields and woods', patronising their rural relatives as creatures 'who know nothing of life, and very little of manners' (MacDonald, 1858: 24). However, while satirising the 'garden morality' of these middle class caricatures, MacDonald is equally critical of the younger fairies who steal rose leaves, crying 'All for the good of the community!' in response to the Rose Fairy's complaint that 'I don't choose you to have them: they are my property' (MacDonald, 1858: 27). The arguments over property ownership and social snobbery culminate in a scene that sees the calceolaria fairy bite a dying primrose. Jealous of the primrose's birthright, she claims justification on grounds of Primrose's pride in saying that the other fairies 'should never see Snowdrop; as if we were not good enough to look at her, and she was' (MacDonald, 1858: 31). These comic sketches of class interaction were soon to make regular appearances in MacDonald's children's stories, which he wrote prolifically between 1864 and 1872.[128] Still, for each tale involving mischievous fairies (*Phantastes*, *The Carasoyn*, *Cross Purposes*), hard-working spiders (*The Giant's Heart*) or misshapen, tax-evading goblins (*The Princess and the Goblin*), MacDonald wrote adult novels infused with fantastic and gothic motifs, expressing both cultural estrangement and social danger within urban-centred narratives of individual manly development.

Published in 1863, *David Elginbrod* is the novel that secured MacDonald's literary career. Like so many of his works (including the previously-discussed 'The Broken Swords' and *Phantastes*), it is based around a search for individual manly identity – a bildungsroman that incorporates the elements of MacDonald's 'Christian tragedy'.[129] *David Elginbrod* is the

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[127] In particular, *Phantastes* references Shelley's 'Alastor', works by Schiller and poems by Novalis.
[128] The children's magazine *Good Words for the Young*, which MacDonald edited, failed in 1872.
[129] For an overview of the structure of the 'Christian tragedy', see page 10.

story of Hugh Sutherland's transition from callow student to muscular teacher, a process of spiritual and physical growth that is paralleled to his growing love of his spiritual Father (personified by the eponymous David Elginbrod). Early in the narrative, Hugh (like Walter Colman in *Home Again*) abandons and neglects the Scottish David for the sake of a teaching job in England, essentially abandoning his spiritual home and Father. Without David's guidance, he enters a narrative that assumes a position between fantasy and melodrama, embracing hypnosis, séances and demons as threats invading both the urban environment and the home. These threats are focused around the malevolent Herr von Funkelstein, a Bohemian noble who enters the household of Hugh Sutherland's new employer as a guest, and whose mere presence disrupts the socially accepted norms of masculine and feminine behaviour. Not only does he literally bring 'foreignness' within the bounds of the mid-Victorian home, but he introduces a moral contagion that spreads past the point of infection (Euphra Cameron) to pollute her relationship with Hugh Sutherland, and the security of her household. His effect is one of duality, creating a point of divergence between the acceptable and the unacceptable as between the natural and the supernatural, forming by his presence a 'shadow-world' in which identities, bodies and actions are distorted.

In an apparent contradiction of MacDonald's usual association of muscularity and morality, Funkelstein is introduced to the narrative as a 'tall, powerful, eminently handsome man,' (MacDonald, 1863: II, 119), physically comparable to the protagonist Hugh Sutherland.[130] However, in this instance a powerful frame is firmly dissociated from spiritual strength, and his body is overwritten with physical characteristics that point to his untrustworthy nature. Hugh Sutherland feels an instinctive dislike for Funkelstein, who is marked as an outsider by 'a face as foreign as his tone and accent' (MacDonald, 1863: II, 119).[131] Moreover, the narrator notes that Funkelstein 'did well to conceal the lines of his mouth in a long

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[130] When Hugh and Funkelstein fight in the chapter 'A Bird's-Eye View', we are told that 'strong as Hugh was, the Bohemian was as strong, and the contest was doubtful' (MacDonald, 1863: II, 334).

[131] MacDonald was far from unique in using fantastical imagery to characterise foreign (particularly Bohemian) characters. One famous example is that of Count Fosco in Wilkie Collins's *The Woman in White* (1859) – a novel that bears many stylistic similarities to the later *David Elginbrod*, including the Gothic motifs of mesmerism and somnambulism. In *David Elginbrod,* MacDonald's use of fantastical motifs to characterise the Bohemian noble recalls the common representation of Bohemia in the national media. In October 1859, George William Curtis described the concept of Bohemia as 'the realm of vagabondage [...] a fairy land upon the hard earth [...] Whatever is not 'respectable' they are' (Campbell, 2008: 275). Although Curtis referred to the Bohemian lifestyle rather than the residents of the country 'Bohemia', in the 1872 novel *The Vicar's Daughter* MacDonald comments that 'gypsies used to be considered Bohemians' and that 'the name Bohemian came to be applied to painters, musicians [...] to whom, save by courtesy, no position has yet been accorded by society' (MacDonald, 1872: 79). This interchangeable use of the terms 'Bohemian', 'bohemian' and 'gypsy' in 1872 allows MacDonald to separate descriptions of artists from either the rising gypsy population, or from Bohemia-affiliated nations at that time uniting under Bismarck.

moustache, which flowed into his bifurcated beard' (MacDonald, 1863: II, 148). Despite

MacDonald's passionate defence of the beard as a sign of manliness and physical health,

Greville MacDonald notes that in the years before beards became popularly accepted, 'in

Scotland it was *heathenish* to grow a beard, in England it was *fast* to cultivate a moustache'

(MacDonald, 2005: 234).[132] In an apparent (yet uncharacteristic) acquiescence to some of the

negative cultural associations, the facial hair worn by Funkelstein is used to present him as a

muscular yet subversive threat.[133] Already distrusted as a foreign noble, the reader's

apprehension of Funkelstein is reinforced by the presence of the disguising moustache

(indicating an attitude that is both fast and false), and the bifurcated beard (indicating a

demonic nature). Funkelstein's talent for mesmerism adds to the reader's distrust, expressing

an ability to assert control over another individual's will.

The root of Funkelstein's power over the household (and symbolically over society) is his

power over his former lover Euphra Cameron – the niece of Hugh Sutherland's employer.

Euphra's early submission to Funkelstein (being sexual rather than marital) precipitates a

supernatural parody of the social structures of marriage, in which the power-dynamic

between husband and wife is replaced by Funkelstein's powers of mesmerism and

compulsion. In this way, Funkelstein asserts ownership over Euphra's sleeping body,

invoking the gothic motif of somnambulism to form a doppelganger – splitting her identity

between her daytime self (the respectable and aristocratic Euphra) and her night-time self (the

vampiric, sexualised facsimile of her dead Bohemian aunt Euphrasia).[134] However, it is not

Euphra's identity alone that is disrupted; in many ways, Funkelstein appears as a

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[132] For an overview of the origins of the 'Beard and Moustache Movement', see page 13.

[133] When MacDonald decided to grow a beard in 1849, he swiftly bowed to social pressure, shaving it at the first sign of his prospective father-in-law's disapproval (Raeper, 1987: 72). However, soon after his marriage he once again allowed it to grow, defending his decision to his father by claiming that he was thereby closer to 'God's intent' (Raeper, 1987: 103). He continued to describe it as a sign of natural masculinity, wearing it 'as men wore it before some fops began to imitate women' (Sadler, 1994: 79). Indeed, even within *David Elginbrod* MacDonald combats his own association between beard, moustache and demonic behaviour: In response to Mrs. Appleditch's sanctimonious criticism that 'it is a shame for a man to let his beard grow like a monkey,' the protagonist Hugh Sutherland replies 'a monkey hasn't a beard […] Man is the only animal who has one' (MacDonald, 1863: III, 165). He goes on to assert that 'the Apostles themselves wore beards', pre-emptively dismissing her claim that shaving is a 'sign of Christianity' (MacDonald, 1863: III, 165).

[134] The scenario recalls the Pygmalion plot of *Phantastes,* in which Anodos forces his idealised Marble Lady to assume a tangible and non-idealised presence, or the moment in which Duncan Campbell discovers his unwanted power over Lady Alice's sleeping body in *The Portent.* However, while Anodos's actions are presented as the result of inexperience and youth, Funkelstein's actions are a deliberate attempt to subvert Euphra's identity within her domestic sphere. For a discussion MacDonald's Pygmalion narratives, see Chapter 6: Unmuscular Christianity – Obfuscating Femininity and Chapter 7: Urban Environments, Sexuality and Domestic Control.

doppelganger in his own right – a dark mirror, inverting the masculine qualities of the novel's hero, Hugh Sutherland.

Funkelstein describes his first meeting with Hugh Sutherland as being mediated by 'a thunderstorm and a lecture on biology', a subject which is later defined as 'The science of life [...] connected with animal magnetism' (MacDonald, 1863: II, 157). This invokes the gothic horror of *Frankenstein* while at the same time establishing a sense of attraction between the two men. However, their true connection is mediated by the relationship of each man to Euphra Cameron – on Hugh's part, a desire for an idealised, romantic attachment; on Funkelstein's part, a relationship built upon sexuality and power. For both men, this relationship is encapsulated in the image of two rings – namely a diamond ring belonging originally to Hugh's father, and a crystal ring belonging originally to Euphra's Bohemian aunt. Through Funkelstein's interference, both parties lose possession of their respective rings, Hugh's being stolen directly by Funkelstein, while Euphra is compelled (in her sleep-walking state) to steal that belonging to her aunt.[135] This 'exchange of rings' therefore represents Hugh's desired marital relationship with his beloved – yet it is routed through his antagonist (who retains possession of both rings), and conducted against Euphra Cameron's conscious will.

This stage of the novel therefore becomes a parody of a romantic relationship, conducted on the one hand by Euphra and Hugh, and on the other hand by Euphrasia and Funkelstein, precipitating a disruption in individual identity that introduces the foreign – the disruptive and the alienating – to the mid-Victorian home. Funkelstein's presence is a destabilising influence, embodying the force of historical martial conflicts with Bohemia in a graphic metaphorical attack on Victorian domesticity – as demonstrated by his ability to transform an English lady into an aristocratic yet sexualised Bohemian thief. However, his role is not a simple reflection of historical conflict, or even solely that of an invading foreign nationality; he is an element of the 'queer' – a force of disturbance and disruption that must be combated in order to promote social stability. In the third section of the novel, Funkelstein escapes

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[135] Here, we see further similarities to Wilkie Collins, in particular the theft of the diamond ring in his 1877 *The Moonstone*. While MacDonald and Collins shared many acquaintances, especially among the Pre-Raphaelites, Collins cannot be said to have been a *political* contemporary of MacDonald. Collins was no supporter of marriage, as can be seen in his 1870 *Man and Wife*, which uses the popular motif of accidentally bigamy (through the Scots marriage law) to question the legal position of women in marriage. In contrast, MacDonald's contemporaneous *Malcolm* uses Scots marriage law (and accidental bigamy) to secure the legal authority of the unwitting heir over his irresponsible half-sister.

capture and absconds (along with Euphra) to London, reframing the eddying effect of his presence within an urban environment that further assaults the protagonist's sense of self and social rule. It is here that he is introduced to the moral, physical and economic horrors of a city, yet it is also here that he is introduced to Robert Falconer – a muscular proponent of individual reform within the urban environment, who helps him search for Funkelstein in the hopes of rescuing (and reforming) the 'stray sheep' Euphra Cameron (MacDonald, 1863: III, 126).

David Elginbrod is an interesting narrative, in that it marks a movement away from the close, single-perspective narration of earlier works. In *David Elginbrod* we see the introduction of multiple focalisers, emphasising the shift from single to multiple social bodies within the city. As such, we notice a proliferation in the number, depth and social backgrounds of supporting characters, necessitating an increased focus on the need for social (as well as spiritual) reform. This is emphasised when the heroic character Robert Falconer introduces Hugh Sutherland to a miasma of individuals from the poorer areas of London, creating a common identity between Hugh and the London poor. Hugh is forced to perceive them as the

> faces of his brothers and sisters; which faces having been so many years wrapt in a fog both moral and physical, now looked out of it as if they were only the condensed nuclei of the same fog and filth (MacDonald, 1863: III, 90).

Like the later slum novelists (such as George Gissing), MacDonald approaches the city as the venue of vast and unknowable crowds, untouched by moral or individual concerns yet embodying the 'fog and filth' of their environment. Matthew McKean notes that late-Victorian slum fiction focused to a large extent on the crowd as an amoral and pervasive force, articulating 'imperialist attitudes and concerns about incivility, political and spatial authority, and the self-control of the crowd' (McKean, 2011: 28). He distinguishes this treatment from that of industrial novelists such as Elizabeth Gaskell, arguing that the slum novelists were less concerned with matters of social reform than they were about portraying, celebrating – and to an extent alienating – the changing heart of the city (McKean, 2011: 28). Between these two extremes, MacDonald's urban novels focus on themes of overcrowding, sanitation, charity and poverty, viewing the crowd as an almost Darwinian force that overwhelms and disorientates the protagonist, before splitting it into individuals in need of philanthropic aid and spiritual reform. In *David Elginbrod,* Hugh's introduction to the

impoverished areas of London society exposes MacDonald's representation of the urban environment as region to be cleansed, contained and controlled through 'manly' action. As Hugh Sutherland and Robert Falconer interact with the poorer classes – like two muscular, moral knights surrounded by a miasma of disease, deformity, doubt and dirt – the social changes consequent to rapid urbanisation are internalised, and expressed in the individual bodies and actions of the poor. They not only mirror the physical and moral distortion – the 'fog and filth' – of the city; as 'condensed nuclei', they form a part of it.[136]

In the 1865 novel *Alec Forbes of Howglen*, MacDonald revisits this vision of a brutal urban environment, creating predatory and self-destructive caricatures of the working classes within the crowded city of Aberdeen. *Alec Forbes of Howglen*, like *David Elginbrod*, is the story of a young man translocated from a rural environment into the heart of the city, at which time he loses both his sense of self and his moral compass. Succumbing to the temptations of alcohol and prostitution, Alec is transformed from an apparently strong protagonist into a sickly and dissolute youth who has 'ceased to love his mother […] and had returned the devotion of his friend with a murderous blow' (MacDonald, 1865b: III, 125). As with Hugh Sutherland, Alec's first experience of the city is one of chaotic plurality. Raised in the country village of Howglen, he is unprepared to confront the 'seething of human emotions' in the 'horrible dark abyss, full of raging men' (MacDonald, 1865b: III, 18). Like Anodos in *Phantastes*, Alec becomes lost in an urban fairy land, being entranced by an unmovable 'Marble Lady' in the form of Kate Fraser, before likewise falling victim to seductive Alder Maidens (in the form of prostitutes) and a malicious doppelganger (Patrick Beauchamp).[137] However, while the landscape of *Phantastes* is intensely psychological, the urban edge of *Alec Forbes of Howglen* invites the concerns (if not the bodies) of the urban population into the narrative space. The creatures that appear as caricatures to Anodos provide the stage-setting for Alec's spiritual trial. While it is implied that Alec interacts with some of the poorer members of society on an individual level (as in the gambling dens, public houses and brothels), these interactions take place for the most part outside of the narrative. Within the text, Alec

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[136] MacDonald's representation of the city in *Robert Falconer* and *Alec Forbes* recalls an earlier description of Edinburgh. Writing to Louisa MacDonald in 1855, he exclaimed, 'But the Canongate and the Cowgate! oh such houses! oh filth! and misery! and smells! And winding common stairs! And *grated* unglazed windows on all the landings! And squalid figures looking down from two, three, four, five, six, seven stories! … Some of the dark *closes* and entries look most infernal, and in the dim light you could see something swarming, children or grown people perhaps, almost falling away from the outlined definiteness of the human' (MacDonald, 2005: 229). He went on to contrast the horrors of Edinburgh with 'our orderly *clean* commonplace well-behaved Manchester' (MacDonald, 2005: 229), thereby emphasising the scale of his dismay.

[137] For more information, see 139.

perceives the residents of Aberdeen on a collective basis, 'moving in different directions, like a double-row of busy ants' forming 'first into a meaningless procession; then into a chaos of conflicting atoms; re-forming itself at last into an endlessly unfolding coil, no break in the continuity of which would ever reveal the hidden mechanism' (MacDonald, 1865b: I, 301; 303).

Within a text that focuses to a great extent on the moral impact of urban life, it is surprising that no real attempt is made to explore those aspects of the city environment. Even Alec's decision to visit brothels – a turning point in the narrative – is represented by omission rather than description. Alec's choice is portrayed as one of many 'facts in human life which human artists can not touch. The great Artist can weave them into the grand whole of his Picture, but to the human eye they look too ugly and too painful. Even the man who can do the deeds dares not represent them' (MacDonald, 1865b: III, 92). Likewise, when news of his actions reaches Howglen, it is never explicitly stated. Overhearing her parents discussing the matter, the child Isie Constable (not fully understanding the situation) dreams of 'racks, pincers, screws, and Alec Forbes' (MacDonald, 1865b: III, 116). In fact, one of the only times that Alec comes into close contact with the poorer areas of Aberdeen (within the actual narrative) is in the dissection room, during which Patrick Beauchamp is introduced as Alec's eventual doppelganger. Like Funkelstein, Patrick Beauchamp is represented as a physically powerful yet malevolent nobleman with a penchant for seducing women. When Alec mocks Beauchamp's poor argument during a debating assembly, a fight breaks out which results in Alec receiving 'a candle full in the face' followed by a 'blow on the head which half stunned him; but he did not imagine that its severity was other than an accident of the crush' (MacDonald, 1865b: II, 6). While Alec fails to identify the author of either injury, MacDonald's heavy-handed description of Alec's ignorance implicates Beauchamp. It is their second encounter, however, that reveals the extent of Beauchamp's cruelty.

In his first dissection class, Alec reacts with horror when he witnesses Beauchamp treating a woman's dead body with disrespect. The exchange culminates in another fight, in which Alec perceives himself to be 'the champion of one whom nature and death had united to render defenceless' (MacDonald, 1865b: II, 15). Despite Beauchamp's advantages of both age and size, MacDonald advises us that 'the elasticity of his perfect health soon began to tell', with the result that the younger, weaker, yet morally and physically robust Alec is the victor (MacDonald, 1865b: II, 15). This passage is fraught with contextual detail. While nothing is

openly stated, the dead woman's social history is marked on her body by 'a terrible scar on the forehead, which indicated too plainly with what brutal companions she had consorted' (MacDonald, 1865b: II, 14). Moreover, since the passing of the 1832 Anatomy Act the woman's presence in the dissection room would have indicated her status as criminal, debtor or unclaimed social outcast (Hackenberg, 2009: 69). Alec's first real contact with the poorer classes of Aberdeen society is therefore in defence of the cadaver of an unknown woman, objectified on the dissection table beneath the eyes of his fellow male students. It is a striking parallel to his later experiences with prostitutes, in which he more closely approximates Beauchamp's position as voyeur rather than defender. However, more striking is the line that the dissection class draws between the students and the cadavers – between the educated (if not necessarily wealthy) classes, and the bodies, analysed and dissected, whose living owners appear only on the side-lines of the narrative.

The lay perception of anatomical dissection in the years since the Burke and Hare scandal was distinctly uncomfortable, particularly in Aberdeen (the setting of *Alec Forbes of Howglen*) where discovery of resurrectionist activities provoked riots in 1831 (Mitchell, 1949: 423). Having studied at the University of Aberdeen between 1840-1845 (with a view to a possible career in medicine), MacDonald would have been particularly aware of the controversy surrounding the practice. In December 1831, Andrew Moir (an eminent professor of anatomy in Aberdeen) was chased through the streets after a dog discovered the remains of a cadaver in a shallow grave outside the 'Burkin Hoose' – a secret dissection theatre supplied by a group of resurrectionists (Mitchell, 1949: 423). This event is retold in *Alec Forbes of Howglen* when MacDonald describes a resumption in the anti-resurrectionist riots directed against the Aberdeen school of anatomy, due to rumours that 'great indignities were practiced upon the remains of the *subjects*, that they were huddled into holes about the place, and so heedlessly, that dogs might be seen tearing portions from the earth' (MacDonald, 1865b: III, 12). Although the Anatomy Act made body-snatching both unprofitable and unnecessary, Mitchell's investigation into mid-Victorian burial practices demonstrates that at least one individual in Aberdeenshire was concerned about resurrectionists as late as 1854 (Mitchell, 1949: 426).

When Alec is chased through the streets of Aberdeen on suspicion of being a resurrectionist, the bodies of the accusers form a point of communication between the cadavers and the poorer inhabitants of the city. In an attempt to defend Alec, his friend Mr. Cupples confronts

'a limping ostler' and 'a pale-faced painter', who (we are told) 'seemed himself to belong to the injured fraternity of corpses' (MacDonald, 1865b: III, 17). The physical descriptions together with the actions of the accusers render them unsympathetic. When the painter threatens to 'pang the mou' o' him [Alec] wi the hip o' a corp' the group lose their justification of protecting the sanctity of the grave (MacDonald, 1865b: III, 17). In addition, when they attack the elderly and frail Mr. Cupples (leaving him unconscious while they destroy his home) they demonstrate their willingness to harm the living innocent in return for the protection of the dead.

Given the history of grave-robbing around the University of Aberdeen, the level of criticism directed against the anti-resurrectionists would be surprising if it came from any source other than a prospective medical student. Far from sympathising, MacDonald uses this conflict to emphasise distinctions of both morality and class between the 'victims' (Mr Cupples and Alec Forbes) and the angry crowd. In drawing a parallel between the aggressors and cadavers, MacDonald implies character traits within the crowd that will lead to either poverty or criminality, and thence to the dissection table. Like the animated corpses they resemble (rather than the motionless cadavers the parallel implies that they will one day become), the group demonstrate a complete lack of human empathy, being driven by revenge rather than justice. Their antagonism is therefore not merely the reaction of angry citizens towards potential grave-robbers; it also articulates conflict of a restless 'underclass' ready to attack the wealthy or educated classes over both real and imagined insults. MacDonald's point is echoed by John Ruskin. Addressing the Working Men's Institute at Camberwell, Ruskin is understandably sympathetic towards the plight of the male labourer. He sternly criticises those who waste labour by abusing their working men, asserting that 'if you put him to base labour, if you bind his thoughts, if you blind his eyes, if you blunt his hopes, if you steal his joys, if you stunt his body, and blast his soul, and at last leave him not so much as strength to reap the poor fruit of his degradation', then 'I should like to know how you could kill them more utterly' (Ruskin, 1904: 63). Nevertheless, he is critical of those who seek revenge for their abuse, saying 'None but the dissolute among the poor look upon the rich as their natural enemies, or desire to pillage their houses and divide their property' (Ruskin, 1904: 29).

In *Alec Forbes of Howglen*, the implicit relationship between cadavers and the poor allows us to view Alec's transition into manhood as a simultaneous development of manly social responsibility. Within the dissection room, Alec assumes a position of defence between the

disempowered members of society (represented by the cadavers) and the cruelty of Patrick Beauchamp – this despite the potentially dangerous and destructive nature of those under his protection. Like the abusive masters criticised by Ruskin, Beauchamp's willingness to treat cadavers (together with the poorer students of the university) with 'indignity' creates a parallel between him and the true resurrectionists. However, his brutal nature is only fully revealed when his callous attitude towards the cadavers is viewed alongside his callous treatment of Kate Fraser – the woman Alec loves.

Kate's reaction to the topic of dissection is significant, directing her sympathies away from Alec and towards his malevolent doppelganger. Despite her initial fondness for Alec, her discovery that he participates in dissection classes makes her react with both fear and coldness. Throughout, however, a sense of common identity (expressed as polarity) exists between Kate and the cadavers, and therefore between Kate and the destructive poor. As a result of a London education, we are told that Kate has contracted 'The Byron-fever' – a 'disease belonging to youth as the whooping-cough to childhood' (MacDonald, 1865b: II, 120). Her admiration for Byron's 'indistinct images of pleasure' renders her vulnerable to the attentions of Patrick Beauchamp, who plots to seduce her in revenge against Alec. As such, her love of Byron primes her for exploitation, reducing her body to a mere symbol of the power dynamic between two opposing constructs of masculinity. Although she is neither poor nor a criminal, Beauchamp's pursuit together with her own vulnerability culminates in her physical and spiritual transition from woman to cadaver, mirroring Alec's transition from boy to man.

The parallel between Kate Fraser and the cadavers is emphasised when Alec's developing admiration for his cousin (together with his awareness of her distaste for dissection) leads to Alec's neglect of his anatomy classes. When Mr. Cupples notices Alec's infatuation, he comments that the student has found 'a fresh subjec' – a bonnie young ane' (MacDonald, 1865b: II, 86). More clearly, while Alec works in the dissection room MacDonald describes the way in which his imagination supplants 'the dead face of a man' with 'the lovely face of his new-found cousin' (MacDonald, 1865b: II, 70; 71). Kate's horror at the practice of dissection becomes ironic, as Alec and Beauchamp increasingly develop the same relationship towards her as they had towards the female cadaver in their first dissection class. Alec's growing awareness of Kate's 'plastic' and 'fluent' nature contrasts his reverence for the cadaver, of whom we are told 'No rudeness could hurt that motionless heart – no insult

bring a blush on that pale face' (MacDonald, 1865b: II, 14). However, his tendency to transpose Kate's image onto his cadaver indicates an association, while his attempt to defend Kate from Beauchamp recalls the fight in the dissection room (MacDonald, 1865b: II, 15). In contrast, Beauchamp's brutal objectification and mockery of the cadaver translates into his cruel treatment of Kate Fraser. Just as Funkelstein uses his seduction of Euphra Cameron as a way to control her (and through her, to attack Hugh Sutherland), Patrick Beauchamp attacks Alec by seducing Kate, and proceeds to compel her actions. Kate's victimisation is evident in her admonishment that Beauchamp shouldn't ask her to meet him alone, since 'You know I can refuse you nothing; and you should be generous' (MacDonald, 1865b: III, 52). She later begs him to be kind 'and not make me do what I don't like to do' (MacDonald, 1865b: III, 57).

As Kate falls under Beauchamp's influence, Beauchamp gains power over Alec in a clear articulation of Girard's 'calculus of power', in which 'the bond that links the two rivals is as intense and potent as the bond that links either of the rivals to the beloved' (Sedgwick, 1993: 21; Girard, 1972). While on the one hand this shift in the power dynamic provokes animosity between the two parties, the strength of their relationship is revealed in Alec's sudden emulation of his doppelganger, demonstrating Beauchamp's control, not only over Alec's erotic relationship with Kate, but over his moral (and manly) identity. Beauchamp's increasing influence over Kate drives Alec towards alcohol and dissolution. His body deteriorates as the alcohol undermines 'all power of manly action', and he finds himself 'half-frightened at the power of the beverage over his weakened frame' (MacDonald, 1865b: III, 86). The failure of his strength (both moral and physical) is further demonstrated when the enmity between Alec and Beauchamp culminates in another fight. This time, far from triumphing over Beauchamp, Alec is stabbed and thrown into the river to drown. Alec's defeat is of key importance, emphasising Beauchamp's transformation from antagonist to doppelganger: 'Had Alec then seen his own face, he would have seen upon it the sneer that he hated so upon that of Beauchamp. For all wickedness tends to destroy individuality, and declining natures assimilate as they sink' (MacDonald, 1865b: III, 46). When Alec attacks Beauchamp in order to 'give him the punishment he deserved', it is not Beauchamp but Alec who turns 'suddenly sick', even as his feelings for Beauchamp begin 'approximating in character to those of Beauchamp towards him' (MacDonald, 1865b: III, 84; 91). This antagonistic emulation expresses the close connection formed between Alec and Beauchamp – a 'male homosocial desire' reframed as 'murderous ressentiment' (Sedgwick, 1993: 102).

As a result, Alec's moral standing declines as he attempts to secure the same adulation of his friends that Beauchamp had once enjoyed, in the absence of the admiration of Kate Fraser. Although Alec survives Beauchamp's attempt at murder and sees him dismissed from the university, both Alec and Kate are thereby scarred by his influence. Alec (having apparently absorbed Beauchamp's character) continues to drink heavily and starts visiting prostitutes with his university friends, even knocking his friend Mr. Cupples unconscious when the older man tries to bar his entrance to a brothel. While this attack on Mr. Cupples is enough to make him repent, his moral decline is only halted when Kate, believing herself abandoned by Beauchamp, commits suicide. In doing so, she confirms the common identity between her body and that of Alec's female cadaver, surrendering her individuality and her body to become a mere pawn in the struggle for power and masculine selfhood between two opposing archetypes of male identity.

In *Alec Forbes of Howglen,* we see the alienating tensions of the urban environment expressed through the interaction of bodies, revealing a network of contemporary social concerns inhabiting the periphery of the narrative space. Through the dual antagonism and attraction of Alec's doppelganger Patrick Beauchamp, we witness Alec's struggle to define his own masculine identity within the pluralism and moral temptation of a corrupting city. Meanwhile, in the simple image of the cadaver, disparate social groups and tensions are symbolically interlinked – the anger of the working classes, the rise of prostitution and the failure of the feminine domestic ideal become the backdrop to Alec's narrative of moral degeneration and redemption within the heart of Aberdeen. In *Alec Forbes of Howglen*, as in *Phantastes* and *David Elginbrod*, the city is therefore at once a destabilising influence on individual identity and a dark mirror to the changing landscape of industrialised Victorian society. It becomes a network of power struggles, fuelled by spreading Capitalism and self-interest, threatening the idealised constructs of manliness (and femininity) upon which MacDonald's domestically-centred, morally-hierarchical vision of society is founded.

As this section has demonstrated, the urban environment in MacDonald's narratives is a site of both psychological and social conflict that defies rule and regulation. In *Phantastes*, *David Elginbrod* and *Alec Forbes of Howglen*, narrative closure is not achieved by the taming of the city, but rather by the relocation of the protagonist to his childhood home in full possession of the qualities of manliness. However, in later narratives MacDonald's view becomes less individualistic, beginning to recognise the characters that comprise the urban landscape as

individuals rather than caricatures, and inviting them into the narrative space to be cured or reformed in the hope of reviving the moral compass of the city. As such, in the next section I consider the relationship between men and the city from a different perspective – that of the narrator, through whose eyes we evaluate the urban landscape and from whom we receive moral signification, inviting us as readers to evaluate the city and witness a path towards social reform.

Observing the City

The early interactions between MacDonald's protagonist and the inhabitants of the urban environment, seen in texts such as *Phantastes*, *David Elginbrod* and *Alec Forbes of Howglen*, are curious, in that they exist to provide insight into the individual conflicts of the protagonist rather than drawing direct attention to the societal conflicts of the city. Indeed, particularly in the case of Anodos, the fairies and goblins either mock or else completely ignore the hero, their presence thereby isolating him as an outsider observing an alien environment. He becomes (like Hugh Sutherland and Robert Falconer in their tours of the urban slums in *David Elginbrod*), an urban spectator; a chronicler of a world utterly separate from the more civilised, governable middle class home. In *Walking the Victorian Streets,* Deborah Epstein Nord investigates the relationship between the author and the city, creating a bond between the novelist-spectator and a marginalised population (Epstein Nord, 1995: 2). She argues that for the Victorian novelist, the city became a vehicle through which to represent 'the poor and the outcast as features of a middle class experience [...] illustrating the invasion of disease and disgrace into the homes of the respectable' (Epstein Nord, 1995: 2). In MacDonald's representations of the city, this sense of invasive poverty is frequently (though not always) benign; the spectator's gaze manifestly sympathetic. However, the presence of the urban poor within a novel written for a predominantly middle class audience means that in a literal, if benign, fashion, both the city and its inhabitants are introduced to the middle class home, whether in appeal for social compassion, or as examples of the consequences of unregulated behaviour. In the midst of this environment, MacDonald's protagonists assume the combined roles of the narrator-spectator, and of the soldier-reformer. Michael Brown reminds us that the medical profession in particular viewed the urban landscape as a battlefield; 'a struggle for the "Condition of England" in which bourgeois virtue arraigned itself against the equally malign forces of working-class fecklessness and aristocratic inefficiency' (Brown, 2010:

595). Epstein Nord supports this, noting that urban spectatorship emerged as 'a dialectic between alienation and contagion, between the sometimes liberating and sometimes disturbing sense that the crowd is distant, unknown, and unreadable and the anxiety that proximity to the crowd puts the spectator in dangerous contact with contamination and taint' (Epstein Nord, 1995: 2). As demonstrated in the previous section, MacDonald's urban novels introduce the city as the venue of conflict, change and corruption on an individual and a societal level, and it seems likely that from the mid-1860s onwards, his portrayals owe greatly to the ideas presented by John Ruskin.

By the time *David Elginbrod* was published, MacDonald had been teaching classes at the Working Men's College for several years, and had made the acquaintance of John Ruskin despite the latter's fear that he would 'shock' the evidently pious writer (La Touche, 1863, April 11). Ruskin read *David Elginbrod* somewhat reluctantly in 1863, but found much to admire.[138] Over the following year, MacDonald and Ruskin developed an intimate friendship despite their increasingly hectic lifestyles. Subjects of correspondence ranged from theology to femininity to education and poverty. However, the topic of conversation that appears to have moved Ruskin most is that of urbanisation and its impact upon the natural environment. In *John Ruskin and Switzerland,* John Hayman describes Ruskin's obsession with sketching the towns he visited, chronicling the encroachment of industrialisation 'as if he felt that repeated concern might aid in preserving the towns about which he felt so deeply' (Hayman, 1990: 6). Writing to MacDonald, Ruskin describes his discomfort at coming near 'the hells' of 'great towns with steam and avarice and cruelty and accursed labour' (Ruskin, 1863, November 8). The following year, Ruskin would use the funds left to him on his father's death in April to fund Octavia Hill's tenancy scheme at Paradise Place – a scheme that in later years would greatly influence MacDonald's life and narratives.

In the summer of 1865, MacDonald (under Ruskin's influence and direction) also travelled to the Swiss Alps. Although he had planned to travel through Geneva to meet with Alexander John Scott's family, Ruskin's lamentation that the area had become 'one wilderness of accursed gambling' turned him towards Antwerp instead (MacDonald, 2005: 347). Ruskin's

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[138] Ruskin commented that *David Elginbrod* was full of 'noble things' and 'ought to do much good', yet he appears to criticise MacDonald's decision to have Euphra Cameron forgiven prior to her death, saying 'I should like Euphie [...] to be worried to death when she died' (Ruskin, 1863, June 30).

words appear to have exerted a profound influence. MacDonald's experiences were chronicled in the short story 'A Journey Rejourneyed', which was published in *The Argosy* between December 1865 and January 1866. Distaste for the increase in industrial activity is evident when the narrator describes the railway to Berne as an 'obtrusive snake, without a particle of conscience or even reverence in its hydra-head' (MacDonald, 1865a: 56). He is scathingly critical of the mercenary actions of the rail directors, who, 'if it didn't cost too much' would send it 'right through Strasburg and Cologne Cathedrals [...] that the passengers might have a peep at the queer fancies of our stupid forefathers, who could care to build such places, and never found out the use of steam and iron rails' (MacDonald, 1865a: 57). However, MacDonald's repeated references to other travellers reveal the extent to which the moral condition of man and city are intertwined in his narratives. Directing his comments at his contemporaries (in terms of social position), he criticises their tendency to mock the poorer classes who shared their journey:

> Let him laugh at the cockneys if he will, only let him be kind-hearted; let him avoid their society if he pleases, for much of it may not be desirable; but let him acknowledge the equality of their right in Nature; and when he is thrown into their company, let him behave, not like the gentleman he considers himself to be, but like the gentleman he ought to be (MacDonald, 1865a: 59).

In the passage above, the narrator's annoyance with his fellow 'gentlemen' is balanced by his acknowledgement of the potentially detrimental influence of the 'cockneys', who (he asserts) have been 'ill-bred and ill-taught in the fostering city' (MacDonald, 1865a: 59). The sentiment echoes that expressed by Ralph Armstrong in *Adela Cathcart,* whose experience of the damaging influence of urban inhabitants leads him to work towards their moral reform. Indeed, the behaviour of the poorer classes in urban areas was a topic of national concern, and much of the rhetoric surrounding the poverty debates explicitly referred to the interaction of bodies and morality. In *Sesame and Lilies,* Ruskin captures the sense of confusion and diversity of an urban environment that he perceives to be underpinned by immorality and human culpability. The focus for his image is the policeman, who walks 'up and down the black lane all night to watch the guilt you have created there; and may have his brains beaten out, and be maimed for life, at any moment, and never be thanked' (Ruskin, 1871: 58).

Published in 1865, Ruskin's depiction of the police officer as sacrifice to front line of urban defence evokes a sense of urban danger that is blunted in *David Elginbrod* by the transition from literal policeman (John MacPherson) to moral policeman (Robert Falconer). John MacPherson is a Scottish policeman working in London, who is able (on grounds of nationality) to establish a personal connection to Hugh Sutherland when he asks for help in finding Euphra and Funkelstein in the heart of London. It is interesting to note that within the plurality of the city environment, it is this sense of shared nationality – of family – that promotes a sense of trustworthiness and stability in the city. Indeed, MacDonald asserts that the bond of familiarity in a strange environment was such that 'If they had met on the shores of the central lake of Africa, they could scarcely have been more couthy [friendly or comfortable] together' (MacDonald, 1863: III, 126). Prior to hearing MacPherson speak, Hugh is uncertain where to turn for advice. However, upon hearing the Scots dialect he instantly decides to approach the officer – who in turn is wary before discovering a possible familial connection. With the potential relationship established, Hugh concludes, 'I have no doubt [...] that we are some cousins or other. It's very lucky for me to find a relative, for I wanted some – advice' (MacDonald, 1863: III, 124).[139] On hearing Hugh's story, and realising the areas of London that would be likely targets, MacPherson and Hugh agree not to involve the police directly out of concern for Euphra's reputation, and MacPherson instead directs him to a civilian – Robert Falconer.

Falconer is upheld as separate from the policeman – a force of morality and justice, rather than of law – and MacPherson states his faith that Falconer would look after Hugh 'though a' the policemen i' Lonnon war efter 'im' (MacDonald, 1863: 129). Indeed, it is interesting to note that throughout MacDonald's narratives, there is very little evidence of a police presence; while crimes up to and including murder are committed, they are resolved instead by moral policemen such as Robert Falconer – the manly, regulating Fathers of their social environments.[140] Falconer is introduced as an honourable Scottish gentleman whose familiarity with the poorer areas (such as Shoreditch and Whitechapel) makes him both

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[139] However, MacDonald outlines the limits of this familial connection, stating that Hugh 'took care to say advice, which a Scotchman is generally prepared to bestow of his best. Had it been sixpence, the cousinship would have required elaborate proof, before the treaty could have made further progress' (MacDonald, 1863: III, 124).
[140] See, for example, the exoneration of the vicious Lord Movren in *Donal Grant,* or Thomas Wingfold's intervention in Leopold's involvement in a murder in *Thomas Wingfold, Curate*.

accepted and respected by the inhabitants. Straddling the boundary between preacher, doctor and policeman,[141] Falconer ministers to the poor and sick in an attempt to initiate a moral reform that is closely associated with the health of their bodies and the cleanliness of their environment.

In the 1850s and 1860s, central urban areas of the United Kingdom were plagued by outbreaks of cholera and typhus, prompting intense debates on public health. The interaction of body and morality was central to such discourses, prompting Octavia Hill to declare that 'the spiritual elevation of a large class depended to a considerable extent on sanitary reform' (Whelan, 1998: 43). With the purchase of Paradise Place in 1864 it became her goal to free the poor from 'the corrupting effect of continual forced communication with very degraded fellow-lodgers; from the heavy incubus of accumulated dirt' (Whelan, 1998: 43). Her association of incubi with dirt and neglected housing assumes a relationship between dirt, poverty and immorality (in this case demonic sexuality) – a relationship that was popularly expressed in the association of disease and moral weakness.[142] However, within MacDonald's early novels this designation is problematic, creating a moral designation without truly allowing the bodies of the urban poor the narrative space to present their case. While *David Elginbrod* and *Alec Forbes of Howglen* both introduce the urban inhabitants to the implied reader, the focus is upon their effect on the individual, rather than the facts of their existence; they provide the framework for the developmental journey of the middle class protagonist while their lives and ambitions, like those of Kate Fraser or Euphra Cameron, are secondary to the plot of manly development and the patriarchal distribution of power. Indeed, in March 1868 Ruskin would criticise what he perceived to be MacDonald's 'unanimous partiality to the Proper side' that leaves 'all real failure, great or small [...] as little logically [sic] to be touched by such consolation as the vast catastrophe of a cruel life' (Ruskin, 1868, March 7). Ruskin's criticism is understandable, and not only due to his often-stated belief in his own spiritual paucity. His increasing involvement with Octavia Hill's tenancy projects

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[141] Oddly, his official profession is that of a lawyer – but this is only briefly mentioned in the 1868 novel *Robert Falconer* (MacDonald, 1868b: III, 179).

[142] In *Annals of a Quiet Neighbourhood* (1866), MacDonald writes that 'a sick man is not a *whole* man', thereby rendering the sick man unmanly (MacDonald, 1867a: II, 217). Confirming this, in *Adela Cathcart* Harry Armstrong's medical competence is judged according to his manliness and physical health, while that of Dr Wade is called into question as a result of his '*pudgy,* flabby figure' (MacDonald, 1864a: I, 94). Going further, the narrator places Harry's body in opposition to Adela's illness, asking, 'how could such health and ruddy life have anything to do with the worn pallor of her countenance?' (MacDonald, 1864a: I, 45). In this way, an assertion of male physical health becomes an implied statement of both masculinity and morality, while corresponding ill health becomes a statement of implied moral paucity.

also drew attention to those on the lowest rung of the social strata, whose living conditions would likewise have excluded them from MacDonald's early narratives of redemption. It was Ruskin who asked MacDonald to accept Octavia Hill as his guest in Bude during the summer of 1867 – a holiday that would profoundly influence MacDonald's writings over the coming years.

In 1867, Hill was exhausted from her tenancy work in Paradise Place and Freshwater Place, eventually (and reluctantly) agreeing that she needed a period of respite. However, the tenants were never far from her thoughts. On 23rd June she wrote a letter to them, assuring them of her devotion and explaining that she has only left her work for a short while, in the hope of returning 'far better able to do it than I was' (Maurice, 1913: 231). Her bitter despair is clear in the tone of this letter when she writes, 'There is little or nothing I can do for you now ; the old days of work are over for the present' (Maurice, 1913: 232). Her exhaustion left Ruskin deeply worried. On 3rd September he wrote to MacDonald in Bude, begging that she should be permitted to stay with them until they returned to town. He also insisted on covering all expenses incurred by MacDonald on her behalf, playfully acknowledging that Octavia could be 'difficult to manage [...] except through the affections' (Ruskin, 1867, September 3).

MacDonald was also feeling the strain of work, publishing novels more rapidly with each passing year. Between 1866 and 1868 he published eight books, including four novels, one collection of fairytales, one book of poetry, one collection of literary essays and a collection of sermons. Even on holiday in Bude, Greville MacDonald recalls that his father 'wrote hard and took but little pleasure', yet managing 'in spite of his indefatigable writing,' to take 'more share in our romps and pleasures than I can ever remember' (MacDonald, 2005: 370). Octavia Hill was a more than welcome guest, however. Greville in particular recalled her as a 'ministrant angel' who would 'walk with him across the breakwater', and under whose tutelage he began to love the much-feared Latin grammar. As an aside, Greville notes that during that holiday, at the tender age of 11, he also fell 'incidentally but quite permanently' in love with Octavia herself! (MacDonald, 2005: 369). Her influence on Greville's father also seems to have been significant, and her projects become the topic of considerable debate in the novel *Robert Falconer*, which serialised in the *Argosy* in 1867.

In *Robert Falconer,* MacDonald re-introduces a character from *David Elginbrod* whose life's work involves the correction of socially destructive behaviours, and the re-education of individuals belonging to the schismatic classes. These systems of re-education, presented as philanthropic kindness, encourage cleanliness, exercise and physical health in their students, eradicating the impact of urban poverty on both their bodies and souls. In doing so, they legitimise a view of the working classes as morally deficient individuals requiring guidance from the middle classes on the performance of social duties.

Like many of MacDonald's novels (such as *Malcolm*, 1875; *There & Back*, 1890; *A Rough Shaking*, 1891), *Robert Falconer* is the story of a boy who grows to be a man while searching for his missing father. Unlike either Hugh Sutherland (*David Elginbrod*) or Alec Forbes (*Alec Forbes of Howglen*), Robert Falconer does not suffer from any kind of spiritual collapse, his search for his father being literal rather than metaphysical. As such, rather than being a 'Christian tragedy', the novel assumes the form of a standard Bildungsroman with the figure of Falconer at its heart as a Christian hero. Distressed by the scenes of urban poverty he witnesses, Robert Falconer is inspired to purchase houses with the aim to 'provide suitable dwellings for the poor' (MacDonald, 1868b: III, 178). Octavia Hill's principles are asserted in Falconer's belief that no good can be 'effected save through individual contact', and in his determination that the well-being of the poor could be safe-guarded by removing them from the power of degraded landlords, and placing them in the hands of 'persons whom he could trust, and who were immediately responsible to him for their proceedings' (MacDonald, 1868b: III, 178).

While MacDonald dedicated the novel to Alexander John Scott (who had died a few months prior to the novel's publication), David Neuhouser (2007) notes that Octavia Hill's character and working principles are also clearly portrayed by Robert Falconer (Neuhouser, 2007: 9). At one point, MacDonald retells a well-known incident that originally took place between Hill and an undertaker (Hill, 1875: 21). When Falconer questions a landlord about the profitability of his tenement, the landlord replies: 'It's the funerals, sir, that make it worth my while. I'm an undertaker, as you may judge from my costume. I count backrent in the burying. People may cheat their landlord, but they can't cheat the undertaker' (MacDonald,

1868b: III, 179). MacDonald's decision to attribute Octavia Hill's words and principles to a male character is intriguing, distinguishing the philanthropic role of the man from that of the woman. Sascha Auerbach notes a that a similar tendency affected the educational reforms of the 1870s, with the School Boards allocating administrative and authoritative tasks to male employees while roles requiring personal contact with the working classes were deemed more appropriate for 'middle class women with previous experience in domestic reform' (Auerbach, 2010: 65). Despite MacDonald's close involvement with Octavia Hill and her network of philanthropic ladies, Robert Falconer epitomises what Auerbach describes as a masculine approach to reform – approaching his work with a level of bureaucracy and assertive moral authority that was yet a hallmark of Hill's own efforts (Auerbach, 2010: 68).[143] In contrast, when the philanthropic Miss Clare (another clear portrait of Octavia Hill) sets about the spiritual reform of her tenement in *The Vicar's Daughter* (1872), her focus is on personal and domestic relationships – going so far as to establish herself as 'Grannie', the matriarch of her community despite her youth.

In *Robert Falconer,* MacDonald echoes Ruskin's disgust at the greed of landlords. In *Sesame and Lilies,* Ruskin laments the moral state of a country that can allow 'the lives of its innocent poor to be parched out of them by fog fever, and rotted out of them by dunghill plague, for the sake of sixpence a life extra per week to its landlords' (Ruskin, 1871: 40). Like Alec, defending the female cadaver in *Alec Forbes of Howglen,* Robert Falconer stands as a line of defence between a violent or dispossessed working class and their tormentors. However, his role is not merely to protect the poor: as a manly man, Falconer's role is one of social reform, and his corrective capabilities are reflected in the strength and musculature of his body.

While both Hugh Sutherland and Alec Forbes lose physical stature during their spiritual trials, Falconer remains physically imposing. In *David Elginbrod,* Falconer's spiritual supremacy is asserted in a physical comparison with Hugh Sutherland. Falconer, apparently

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[143] Octavia Hill's approach to urban reform was founded on the idea that investment in any activities should return 5% on the principle, thereby ensuring the longevity of the work while releasing her tenants from the obligation of 'charity'. John Ruskin (who provided the funds for the purchase of Paradise Place) was a keen supporter of this argument. Hill was also strict in the enforcement of rent payments, and in the enforcement of 'appropriate' behaviour among her tenants. For further information on Octavia Hill's reform work, see (Darley, 2010; Whelan, 1998).

embodying the 'right condition of heart' for masculinity, is both muscular and tall, to the extent that 'Six-foot Hugh felt dwarfed beside him' (MacDonald, 1863: III, 90). Hugh's comparative diminution in respect of both stature and masculinity is corroborated by his depiction as 'a gentleman who *must* wear out his dress-coat' (MacDonald, 1863: I, 55). In contrast, Falconer has 'a general carelessness of demeanour' that suggests honesty rather than superficiality (MacDonald, 1863: III, 90). Moreover, MacDonald's preponderance for physiognomial description is evidenced by Falconer's facial features, which are described as being in 'complete harmony of relation with his whilom premature and therefore portentous nose' (MacDonald, 1868b: II, 214). As a result, we are told that 'his whole countenance bore self-evident witness of being a true face and no mask, a revelation of his individual being, and not a mere inheritance from a fine breed of fathers and mothers' (MacDonald, 1868b: II, 214).

Taken together, Falconer's body and character generate an image of harmony and honesty, reinforced by 'reposeful strength and quiet concentration of will' (MacDonald, 1863: III, 91). The continued assertion of Falconer's synergistic nature – his 'true face', his 'harmony of relation', his 'reposeful and quiet' disposition – allows him to demand that same quiescence from his dissolute protégés, while his physical strength and strength of purpose show his determination in this regard. Like his namesake the 'falconer', Robert Falconer trains his students to fly within the limits of his own social morality, and chastises those who fail to conform to his expectations.

Paternalism and Urban Reform

Throughout MacDonald's narratives, the need for social cohesion is prioritised over the suffering of individuals. Evidence for this can be seen in the development of the ensign in 'The Broken Swords', or the submission of the factory workers in 'A Dream Within A Dream' and 'A Manchester Poem'. In later narratives, we likewise divine fish being rewarded for agreeing to be eaten, foretelling Malcolm's assertion of an allotted social order between fish and fisherman at the Armageddon. While at first these arguments may seem strange due to his dislike of the eugenics debate, the profoundly theological nature of his reformative processes (together with their focus on spiritual rather than physical superiority)

distinguished them from either Communism or biological Darwinism. Indeed, MacDonald's individualised focus of social reform echoed the work of many advocates of the Christian Socialist movement, and brought him to the attention of allied philanthropic networks in London. When Lady Noel Byron became his patron following the publication of *Within & Without* in 1855, it precipitated his move to London in 1859 and in doing so increased his exposure to the debates on social (particularly urban) reform that concerned so many of his new acquaintances. In October 1859, F.D. Maurice invited MacDonald to give a series of talks on poetry to the Women's Classes at the Working Men's College in Red Lion Square, through which he met Octavia Hill (Darley, 2010: 51). In the same year he accepted a professorship at Bedford College, despite Henry Crabbe-Robinson's objections about the low salary (Raeper, 1988: 162). With MacDonald's move to London (and the corresponding increase of his involvement with the Christian Socialists and the Working Men's College), his narrative technique noticeably begins to embrace a wider, multi-class readership that engages with contemporary debates on reform and urbanisation.

In both *Robert Falconer* and *David Elginbrod*, Falconer engages directly with working-class individuals to control their alleged tendencies towards alcoholism, violence, prostitution and theft. The importance of individual as opposed to systematic reform is asserted when Falconer instructs his uncle not to offer a commission to Shargar, Falconer's closest friend and first protégé, and to 'lay nae consequences upo' him, for he cudna stan' unner them' (MacDonald, 1868b: II, 153). From knowing the impoverished and 'doglike' Shargar on an individual level, Falconer is able to assert that the youth would be spiritually ruined by an abrupt rise in fortune. Shargar's disadvantaged social and spiritual condition is represented in his physical contrast to Falconer. Described as a 'human animal,' Shargar is 'lean, with pale-red hair, reddish eyes,' and a complexion so pale that he is 'half way to an Albino' (MacDonald, 1868b: I, 33; 76). Even his nickname is a word 'applied with some sense of the ridiculous, to a thin, wasted, dried-up creature' (MacDonald, 1868b: I, 25). Physically, he is portrayed as a sickly combination of delicacy and animalism, and this incongruity is at length described as a result of his illegitimate parentage.

MacDonald's association between parentage and physical health is outlined *David Elginbrod,* when the eponymous hero declares to Hugh Sutherland, 'I ken naething aboot yer family; but

ye seem at eesicht to come o' a guid breed for the bodily part o' ye' . Later, he expands on
this philosophy by expressly linking lineage with a natural tendency to morality, saying
'Man, it's a fine thing to come o' a guid breed. They hae a hantle to answer for 'at come o'
decent forbears' (MacDonald, 1863: I, 159). Here, MacDonald appears to argue that men
who come from a 'good' family – meaning a family that embraces specific moral and social
values – are more likely to be possessed of masculine stature. The criteria defining a 'good'
family, however, are built upon a class-based morality, acting in defence of domestic stability
and social quiescence. Under these principles, it appears natural and expected that a well-
born individual should possess a strong sense of social morality, yet for an individual of
working-class or illegitimate birth, articulation of the same principles is the exception rather
than the norm. As such, coming of a 'guid breed' indicates a history of family members who
uphold the principles of an Anglican middle class morality, yet simultaneously allows
MacDonald to associate a character's physical strength with the moral strength of his
ancestors.

However, while physical strength is used to represent 'good breeding', other stock physical
characteristics are used to represent social position independent of morality. Just as the
protagonist of 'The Broken Swords' is distinguished by his white hands, so in *Robert
Falconer* do Shargar's 'small delicate hands and feet' constitute a gift of his noble-born
father, while their delicacy and lack of 'character and strength' indicate the moral weakness
of both father and son (MacDonald, 1868b: I, 76). In contrast, his 'expressionless' nose and
mouth (together with his animalistic nature) are described as the gift of his gypsy mother
(MacDonald, 1868b: I, 76). Implying the nomadic tendency attributed to gypsies, Shargar has
'the power of enjoying the present without anticipation of the future or regard of the past,'
which MacDonald informs us is 'the happiness of cab horses and of tramps' or of 'the human
nature in proportion as it has not been developed beyond the animal' (MacDonald, 1868b: I,
34). In Shargar's sickliness and delicacy, we see a physical representation of his 'indecent
forbears', and this physical incongruity is translated into moral weakness when he
demonstrates a penchant for theft that is only cured by the vigilance and castigations of
Falconer.

Shargar's relationship to Falconer is curious, in as much as Falconer assumes the position of provider, protector and moral judge over his friend. Shargar is described as Falconer's dog, in lieu both of his devotion and his obedience (MacDonald, 1868b: II, 79). When Shargar exhibits behaviour that Falconer finds disagreeable – such as eating at an inappropriate time, drinking whiskey, stealing, or refusing to give up his money to someone that Falconer considers more deserving (such as Dooble Sanny) – Falconer chastises him. This leads to Shargar's mortified capitulation, accompanied by threats of suicide if Falconer fails to forgive him. Like the dog that he is compared to, Shargar is 'trained' by Falconer into respectability, and MacDonald describes the situation as inevitable, arguing, 'how could he be other than lives behind Robert? For the latter had ancestors – that is, he came of people with a mental and spiritual history; while the former had been born the birth of an animal' (MacDonald, 1868b: I, 245). Blurring the boundaries between educator and philanthropist, Robert Falconer influences Shargar's development in terms of both moral and physical health – yet however much Shargar 'improves', MacDonald asserts that it would be impossible for him to either match or exceed Falconer. By denoting Shargar's parentage as the cause of his inferiority, MacDonald states that he must always remain below Falconer's level. While apparently dissociating the concepts of ancestry and social rank – reclassifying family history as a moral rather than a social measure – MacDonald reaffirms the concept that social morality (and consequent masculinity) is dependent upon an appropriate (and in Shargar's case, legitimate) family background.

In *Robert Falconer*, the position of moral authority that Falconer assumes over Shargar is mirrored by the patriarchal authority that he later assumes over the urban slums in *David Elginbrod*.[144] Despite their comparative ages, Falconer exercises control over Shargar's actions, training him to become a 'man' by teaching him to obey. Similarly, Falconer – who is recognised by the police in *David Elginbrod* as a man with knowledge and control over the urban poor – trains his protégés to labour as dictated by their gender and social position. Working-class men are trained by Falconer in obedience and submission to the social hierarchy, while repentant women are sent to his friend, Miss St John, to become useful and modest domestic servants.[145] The effects of such rehabilitation are clearly portrayed in Shargar's developing physique. Whereas at the opening of the narrative Shargar declares that

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[144] Although *Robert Falconer* was published four years after *David Elginbrod*, *David Elginbrod* is chronologically the later narrative.

[145] For more information, see Chapter 7: Urban Environments, Sexuality and Domestic Control.

he is 'ower shochlin' (in-kneed) for a sodger,' obedience leads to an increase in stature and strength, with the result that 'his legs grew straighter, till the defect of approximating knees […] all but vanished' enabling him to enlist as a recruit for the British military in India (MacDonald, 1868b: I, 28; II, 254). Just as a defective physique inhibits his ability to act in defence of his homeland, Shargar's growing morality leads to an improved physical health that smoothes his path to martial activity. Service in the army perfecting his obedience and doing 'everything that was wanted for his outward show of man,' Shargar returns from India as the masculine George Moray (MacDonald, 1868b: III, 38). Not only is his hair 'darkened by the Indian sun' making 'the albino look less remarkable', but 'the drawling walk had vanished, and a firm step and soldierly stride had taken its place,' indicating that strength, certainty and physical health have replaced his erstwhile sickliness, moral weakness and hesitancy (MacDonald, 1868b: III, 38). Even his eyes 'no longer rolled slowly from one object to another, but indicated by their quick glances a mind ready to observe and as ready to resolve,' and MacDonald advises that 'there could be no doubt that Shargar was now a gentleman' (MacDonald, 1868b: III, 38). Confirming this rise in social status from illegitimate thief, Shargar loses the animalistic appearance that had been so incongruous next to his physical delicacy, and we are told that 'his high descent came out in the ease of his carriage and manners' (MacDonald, 1868b: III, 38). However, when Falconer offers to call him 'George Moray', giving up the animalistic nickname of Shargar, his friend replies 'If you ever call me anything else, Bob, I'll cut my throat [...] if any other man does, I'll cut his' (MacDonald, 1868b: III, 28). Through the development of Shargar's masculine body, MacDonald shows that obedience to a moral authority can erase a disadvantageous parentage, and allow sufficient masculine development for an individual to become a productive member of society – in this case, through martial action. Yet Shargar's insistence that Falconer retain the nickname indicates his awareness that however much he grows in manliness, must always remain subservient to a man constructed of more appropriate materials.

Shargar's physical rehabilitation allows us to view the way in which self-control and class-led obedience are reflected in the development of the male body, and how in turn that masculine development signifies an ability to contribute to social security. Shargar's conversion from sickly albino to strong soldier demonstrates a shift from malefactor to homeland defender, while simultaneously articulating his development from animal (shargar)

to gentleman (George Moray), and his class transition from thief to (albeit illegitimate) noble. In subsequent narratives, Shargar's social re-education becomes a template for the development of morality in individuals from similarly disadvantaged social backgrounds, thereby allowing members of an apparently unstable and fragmented social order to become productive members of a unified society.

Aside from a brief sketch in *David Elginbrod* and an exceedingly individualistic perspective in *Alec Forbes of Howglen, Robert Falconer* is one of the first of MacDonald's novels to closely scrutinise the lives of the urban poor. However, when the MacDonald family came to live in Hammersmith in September 1867, the perspective of *Robert Falconer* was swiftly repeated in other novels. With the move to Hammersmith (a few miles from the ongoing projects at Paradise Place, Freshwater Place and Barrett's Court), the MacDonald family began to play a far more active role in Octavia Hill's work. In June 1868 they began to open their home to Hill's tenants, holding annual entertainments in their honour (Hein, 1999: 292; Neuhouser, 2007: 10). Many of MacDonald's friends came in addition to the tenants, including John Ruskin, Emelia Gurney, Charles Edmund Maurice, Arthur Hughes, the Burne-Joneses – even Tennyson on one occasion (MacDonald, 2005: 380). While many amusements were provided on these occasions, the most notable is the decision of the MacDonald family to form an acting troupe, performing morally educative plays such as *The Pilgrim's Progress*, *The Tetterby's* and *The Blue Beard*.[146] Indeed, the performances were so popular that Louisa MacDonald (George MacDonald's wife) successfully published a collection of plays (*Chamber Dramas for Children*) with Alexander Strahan.

Strahan was already well-known to the MacDonald family through his work with the Christian magazine *Good Words*, and its newly launched children's supplement *Good Words for the Young* (initially edited by Norman MacLeod). As Tania Scott notes, the aim of the children's magazine was to set 'a distinctly Christian tone, and to reinforce the conventional family unit' (Scott, 2010: 41). MacDonald was a regular contributor to both magazines, and assumed the Editorship of *Good Words for the Young* between 1869-1873. One of MacDonald's first full-length novels for children – *At the Back of the North Wind* – began serialising in *Good Words for the Young* in November 1868, prior to MacDonald assuming

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[146] Manuscripts of many of these plays are available in Louisa MacDonald's book *Chamber Dramas for Children.*

the Editorship. The story's popularity is evident in MacLeod's decision to announce MacDonald's leadership of the magazine as that of a 'fine 'Old Boy' at the helm' with 'a steady 'North Wind' at his back' (Scott, 2010: 41).

At the Back of the North Wind is described by Jean Webb as a text that sits on the boundary between 'the realist social problem novel' and 'fantasy writing for children', combining (like Charles Kingsley and Lewis Carroll) the fantastic with 'a philosophical and moral discussion and critique of the contemporary Victorian society' (Webb, 2007: 15). The plot focuses on the life of a cabman's family living within the urban heart of London. The hero is the child Diamond, a frail but highly spiritual boy whose home-centred view of life is abruptly expanded by the influence of the personified North Wind. Under her tutelage, Diamond is introduced to individuals from multiple social backgrounds, and learns that what may appear cruel (the cold of the North Wind) instead works towards their spiritual development. On one occasion, Diamond watches as the North Wind sweeps the streets of London clean with her broom, transforming from a breeze into a storm. As she sweeps 'all the people home' Diamond notices a young girl struggling against the storm (MacDonald, 1871b: 41). Indeed, the narrator tells us that 'It seemed as if the wind had a spite at her -- it kept worrying her like a wild beast, and tearing at her rags' (MacDonald, 1871b: 41). When Diamond asks why the North Wind should be more cruel towards the girl than towards himself, North Wind replies 'There are reasons, Diamond. Everybody can't be done to all the same. Everybody is not ready for the same thing' (MacDonald, 1871b: 42). The harassment of the North Wind is soon proven justifiable when we are told that the girl would have been home before the storm struck, had she not been 'indulgin' in door-steps and mewses' (MacDonald, 1871b: 45). Through the girl (Nanny), Diamond is introduced to the poorer areas of the city. In a clear reference to Octavia Hill's tenancy project at Paradise Place, Nanny lives with her grandmother in 'a very dirty lane' ironically named 'Paradise Row' (MacDonald, 1871b: 185). The social condition of the area is alluded to by Nanny's pride in her 'wicked' and drunken grandmother's 'pre-eminence in swearing' (MacDonald, 1871b: 186). Moreover, when Diamond asks a policeman for directions to Nanny's house, the policeman expresses concern. Recognising that a boy like Diamond could not be 'bred' in 'an ugly place' like Paradise Row, and afraid for his safety, the policeman decides to follow him (MacDonald, 1871b: 203; 204). Before long, it becomes necessary for him to defend Diamond from being

attacked by a group of apparently non-maternal mothers, who are intent on stealing his clothes.

When Diamond locates Nanny's house, the physical condition of the property attests to its morally damaging influence. Not only is the property 'dreary' and 'dark', but the window (which exists 'below the level of the street') is covered with mud, while the furniture covering the street grating above shuts out 'almost all the light' (MacDonald, 1871b: 205). The emphasis on darkness and obscured windows carries a spiritual as well as physical significance. This is underscored in the chapter 'Nanny's Dream', when the darkness of Paradise Row is contrasted with a window-filled house in the moon. Within the dream, Nanny's job is to keep the windows bright, yet while cleaning she knowingly breaks a rule of the house – opening a box belonging to her mistress – and precipitates a storm that causes all of the windows of the house to be obscured by clouds (MacDonald, 1871b: 306; 307). Realising her disobedience, the mistress says 'I am sorry to find [...] that you are not to be trusted. You must go home again' (MacDonald, 1871b: 307). Later, she reflects that Nanny is 'only fit for the mud' and instructs her companion to 'take that ring off her finger. I am sadly afraid she has stolen it' (MacDonald, 1871b: 307). The ring that Nanny has allegedly 'stolen' was in fact lent to her by a lady, and is used as a metaphor for Nanny's dream of social advancement. While looking into the ruby, Nanny sees the stone transformed into a 'red sunset, which shone in at the end of a long street near where Grannie lives'. Frustrated by her 'rags', and by the 'great holes in my shoes, at which the nasty mud came through to my feet', Nanny asks 'Why couldn't I live in the sunset instead of in that dirt? Why was it so far away always? Why did it never come into our wretched street?' (MacDonald, 1871b: 293).

While initially the reader is invited to pity Nanny, the chapter 'Nanny's Dream' recalls North Wind's refusal to stop tormenting her on the grounds that 'Everybody is not ready for the same thing' (MacDonald, 1871b: 42). By interceding on Nanny's behalf, Diamond prevents the North Wind from sweeping her home alone, thereby teaching her the consequences of 'indulging in doorways and mewses' and encouraging the development of obedience towards her grandmother in place of (however justifiable) insurrection. Nanny's failure in the moon-house underscores the message that she will never 'live in the sunset' due to her disobedience, and this is corroborated when she leaves Paradise Row to live with Diamond's

family. Despite Diamond's efforts to help her, Nanny and her friend Jim continue to mock him, referring him as 'God's baby' and regarding him 'as a mere toy, except when they found he could minister to the increase of their privileges or indulgences, when they made no scruple of using him' (MacDonald, 1871b: 345). Whether or not Diamond realises that by helping Nanny he has potentially stifled her spiritual development, *At the Back of the North Wind* articulates the perception that in some instances, charity can have an adverse effect on the recipient.

While lauding charity as a social and spiritual virtue, many of MacDonald's narratives of urban reform address contemporary concerns over the complex (and sometimes counter-productive) charitable operations aimed at alleviating the effects of poverty. Raeper theorises that MacDonald's experiences of social work with John Kennedy in Aberdeen (1842-1844) helped form his belief that 'help had to come mainly through individuals and not through societies' (Raeper, 1988: 51). However, MacDonald's interest in urban reform during the 1860s and 1870s makes it likely that his more immediate influences were John Ruskin and Octavia Hill. Addressing the problem of charity in 1865, Ruskin noted that 'we make our relief either so insulting to them, or so painful, that they rather die than take it from our hands' (Ruskin, 1871: 55). In 1867, Octavia Hill had written to her friend to lament that 'a gigantic machinery of complicated charities relieves a man of half his responsibilities, not once and for all clearly and definitely, but probably or possibly he gets help here or there. There is no certainty, no quiet, no order in his way of subsisting' (Maurice, 1913: 227). Two years later, she helped to establish the Charitable Organisation Society (COS), which functioned under the premise that the disorganised nature of charitable institutions left them open to abuse as well as to conflict, duplication and inefficacy in their operations. However, by acting as a 'distributive body' rather than a charitable concern, Darley notes that the COS was able to direct charitable aid to those considered to be 'deserving' (Darley, 2010: 111). As such, Darley notes that the COS used control of charitable funds to press for social and spiritual reform amongst the poorer classes, with the result that the Society became increasingly 'moralistic and inflexible' (Darley, 2010: 112).

The novel *Robert Falconer* demonstrates that even before the foundation of the COS, the implications of charitable control were already established: 'It is better to endow one man,

who will work as the Father works, than a hundred charities' (MacDonald, 1868b: III, 305). Given John Ruskin's close involvement with the COS (he had drafted the prospectus for its precursor – the London Association for the Prevention of Pauperism and Crime – and remained an active member of the COS council for many years (Darley, 2010: 113)), MacDonald's early sympathy with the COS is unsurprising. While MacDonald would have been horrified at the thought that charity should be withheld on the basis of social situation, and regularly opened his home to those in need, he firmly believed that charity should be administered 'with some view to the value of the probable return, - with some regard, that is, to the amount of good likely to result to others from the aid given to one' (MacDonald, 1872: II, 92).

The full implication of liberal and unregulated charity is demonstrated by Lady Clementina in *The Marquis of Lossie* (1877). Unable to comprehend the philosophy that 'infliction might be loving kindness', Lady Clementina offers herself 'a willing prey' to 'the race parasitical' (MacDonald, 1878: 157). As a result, she finds that 'her rampant and unsubjected benevolence' either does 'nothing at all, or more evil than good' (MacDonald, 1878: 158). Diamond's determination to protect Nanny from the North Wind is reflected in Clementina's determination to protect Kelpie – a vicious and rebellious mare – from the sometimes violent control of her master Malcolm. In response to Clementina's accusation of cold-blooded cruelty, Malcolm replies 'She's not so very poor, my lady. She has all she wants, and does nothing to earn it [...] If she could speak she wouldn't be fit to live among decent people. But for that matter, if some one hadn't taken her in hand, dumb as she is, she would have been shot long ago' (MacDonald, 1878: 95). Malcolm asserts that apparent harshness is sometimes necessary to defend against greater cruelty and hardship. In doing so, he implicitly justifies the preferential support of the so-called deserving poor, until such time those in need learn to work 'as the Father works' (MacDonald, 1868b: III, 305).

Within each of these narratives – *Robert Falconer*, *At the Back of the North Wind* and *Malcolm* – systematic reform and charity are rejected in favour of an education in morality and social duty, echoing the reasons given by Maurice for the foundation of the Working Men's Colleges. Falconer's education of Shargar is at times harsh and controlling, yet is so successful that the illegitimate 'creature' is transformed into a manly solider. Similarly, in *At

the Back of the North Wind North Wind's apparently unsympathetic treatment of her 'children' has positive results. Even when she sinks a ship, killing the men and women aboard, her actions are described as having a positive effect on the moral development of the middle class family who employ Diamond's father. By sinking the ship, she simultaneously destroys Mr. Coleman's morally-dubious investment. The narrator comments that Mr. Coleman 'speculated a great deal more than was right, and it was time he should be pulled up' since 'some kinds of speculations lead a man deep into dishonesty before he thinks what he is about' (MacDonald, 1871b: 129). North Wind's actions therefore provide Mr. Coleman with a moral lesson, just as her attempt to educate Nanny by 'sweeping' her home would have taught Nanny the value of obedience, had Diamond not intervened.

Within MacDonald's narratives, we see how the urban environment is portrayed as a chaotic and pluralistic force that fosters moral dissolution through its impenetrable nature. As such, the city becomes a fairy land in which MacDonald's protagonists become lost before finding their manly identity. Their voyages of self-discovery occur against a backdrop of urban social chaos, in which the destructive influences of Capitalism and social unrest are marked upon the bodies of the poor. The setting allows MacDonald to directly reference contemporary themes, such as social housing and the organisation of charitable efforts – yet once again (and despite the reality of Octavia Hill as the female pioneer), it is the corrective influence of the soldier / father that makes MacDonald's social causes a reality. Within these narratives, MacDonald's 'manly' man assumes the position of moral policeman over the poor, correcting their behaviours in a fine example of inter-dependent education, domestic authority and social reform.

Chapter 5: Saintly Androgyny

To this point, my argument has been concerned with the relationship between the concept of manliness and the signifiers of morality and muscularity, articulating the ways in which these connections are strengthened, framed or given new emphasis within different (although frequently inter-related) discourses. Moreover, I have shown that for MacDonald's male protagonists, muscularity develops in tandem, not only with obedience and social awareness, but with an ability to resist assimilation into the Capitalist environment – invoking the domestic over the military or workplace hierarchy, establishing 'sublime' work practices or establishing networks of moral reform within the urban landscape. As such, it becomes apparent that the designation of gender within discourses of manly development has little to do with the literal categorisation of sex, being defined in terms of social relationships and authority networks rather than biology. Linda Dowling draws attention to this disconnect between gender and sex by describing the designation of 'effeminacy' within Victorian narrative as part of a discourse of classical Republican rhetoric, arguing that that 'The strangeness of "effeminacy" is that it has nothing to do with maleness or femaleness' but rather with 'an absence or privation of value' (Dowling, 1994: 5; 6). As such, non-masculine status is allocated to those 'perceived as unsuitable to or incapable of discharging the martial obligation to the polis' (Dowling, 1994: 6).

In this chapter, I consider those male protagonists within MacDonald's narratives who appear (at first sight) to blur the boundaries of gender, disrupting MacDonald's usual templates of manly power and authority – characters such as Diamond (*At the Back of the North Wind*), Eric Ericson (*Robert Falconer*), Gilbert Galbraith (*Sir Gibbie*) and Clare Skymer (*A Rough Shaking*). Far from being exemplars of either muscular Christianity or moral athleticism, these characters appear androgynous, both physically and socially. Nevertheless, unlike 'dandified', fashionable characters such as George Bascombe (*Annals of a Quiet Neighbourhood*) or Lord Meikleham / Liftore (*Malcolm* and *The Marquis of Lossie*), these androgynes are yet hailed as moral paragons, apparently 'queering' conventional representations of manliness by comprising 'the best of the feminine and the masculine' (Thacker, 2001: 5). However, I argue that the apparent 'queerness' of MacDonald's androgynous characters is an illusion, disguising a narratological return to convention just as

his portrayal of powerful female characters (such as North Wind and Great-Great-Grandmother Irene) reinforces the domestication of women.[147]

As Sedgwick asserts, literary representations of male androgyny are 'a fiction' describing 'a symmetrical relation between men and women in which one person (a man) could place himself "halfway between" the two genders in order to view, and enjoy, them equally' (Sedgwick, 1993: 55). As such, I argue that while appearing to balance the male and the female, the feminine characteristics of MacDonald's androgynous characters do not offer 'improvement'. While characters such as Diamond are usually portrayed as divine ideals of child-like manliness, I demonstrate that the language underpinning their characterisation instead articulates the impracticality of their natures, positioning them as unworkable ideals of masculinity that exist in conflict with the social realities of their environment. Reinforcing this, I consider the placement of MacDonald's androgynes within contemporary discourse, including the portrayal of manliness within the intellectual or ecclesiastical professions, and the victimisation of the spiritual and the effeminate within an increasingly capital-driven environment. In addition, I consider androgyny as a problematic characteristic for MacDonald's characters in the years after Walter Pater's publication of *The Renaissance* in 1873. Dowling argues that *The Renaissance* is an early example of a counter-discourse attempting to reclaim sentimentality and so-called effeminacy as attributes of manliness, portraying the origins of 'male love' in the narratives of Classical Greece (Dowling, 1994: xv). Dowling and Fiske both note the centrality of Classical Greece to discourses on manly development from all areas of the philosophical spectrum, describing it as equally influential for John Newman's theories of Christian education as for Oscar Wilde's role in establishing homosexuality as an identity rather than a criminal pathology (Fiske, 2008: 11; Dowling, 1994: xv). However, while Alan Sinfield rightly notes that effeminacy and *homosexuality* were not directly associated until the twentieth century (Sinfield, 1994: vii), in the years after *The Renaissance* and the birth of the Aesthetic cry of 'art for art's sake', effeminacy (particularly Grecian effeminacy) drew an association between male beauty and a social milieu increasingly linked with decadence and hedonism.[148]

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[147] See page Chapter 6: Unmuscular Christianity – Obfuscating Femininity.
[148] Sinfield likewise notes that Oscar Wilde 'adopted his appearance as effeminate aesthete in 1877' (Sinfield, 1994: 2), yet this was not taken as an indication of homosexual tendencies. Rather, it was taken as an indication of a Byronic 'excessive attractiveness to women', marking him perhaps as a potential seducer of women, but not of men (Sinfield, 1994: 4).

I argue that these factors, together with the later homosexual panics surrounding the Criminal Law Amendment Act and the LaBouchere Amendment of 1885, led to a shift in MacDonald's representation of male androgyny. Far from mediating between divergent models of male behaviour, I argue that when faced with this new aspect of homosexual representation, MacDonald adapted his writing to defend his androgynes from association with homosexuality and the discourses surrounding it, frequently showing 'saintly' androgyny as a transient state of idealised male childhood that develops into full manliness, while prolonged effeminacy grew to be associated with depictions of 'Grecian' beauty and social (or sexual) immorality. Nevertheless, within these later narratives, childhood androgyny continues to serve a function, neutralised as it is by the development of adulthood manliness.

Isolated (and victimised) by the materialistic concerns of their social environments, these characters are presented as possessing a bond with the natural world that allows MacDonald to articulate their values as part of a 'natural law'. Sedgwick notes that such a naturalisation of social principles allows authors to 'negotiate invisibly between the contradictory elements in the status quo', disguising points of conflict by portraying them as unnatural (Sedgwick, 1993: 119). As such, the principles of Darwinism are much in evidence within these narratives, yet for MacDonald, this is a moral / social Darwinism (much akin to that articulated in the moral evolution of the water babies in Charles Kingsley's fairy tale – an evolutionary process governed by the maternal archetypes of Mrs. Doasyouwouldbedoneby and Mrs. Bedonebyasyoudid). In MacDonald's *A Rough Shaking,* the social dynamic is even more pronounced. We are offered recurring images of suffering animal bodies, yet MacDonald makes it clear that these animals are proxies for their human counterparts, suffering physical hardship as a result of their own unwillingness to submit to the command of their 'masters'. As such, the androgynous male body achieves full manliness by his realisation of the true 'natural order', adhering to a moral evolutionary hierarchy that puts him in a position of authority, while demonstrating to other members of his social network that it is only through submission that one can achieve social and spiritual peace, as well as material happiness.

The Economy of Nature

Whether utilising the image of the solider body, the father or the teacher, MacDonald's masculine characters articulate an association between physical power and spiritual authority that culminates in the representation of the ideal man as father and protector of his environment, overlaying social interaction and reform with a veneer of domesticity. However, such constructions of manliness were implicitly underpinned by class-based assumptions and the rhetoric of subservience, enforcing obedience to a social hierarchy under the guise of compelling obedience to the will of God / the Father. Published in 1875, *Malcolm* (together with its 1877 sequel *The Marquis of Lossie*) is arguably one of MacDonald's most socially dictatorial narratives, in which the body of the muscular protagonist appears driven by an increasing imperative to pacify social rebellion and uphold both class and gender hierarchies. Indeed, in *Malcolm* obedience to the social hierarchy is described as an essential component in the battle of Armageddon. In a passage strikingly reminiscent of Maurice's 1866 appeal for social unity through the collective acceptance of social responsibility (Maurice, 1866: vii), Malcolm creates a parallel between Armageddon and his work as a fisherman, arguing that the battle can only be won if each creature performs its allotted role. He claims, 'The herrin's like the fowk 'at cairries the mate an' the pooder an' sic like for them 'at does the fechtin'. The hert o' the leevin' man's the place whaur the battle's foucht [...] an' the fish they haud fowk up till 't' (MacDonald, 1875b: II, 11).

Through the martial imagery of Armageddon, MacDonald associates the social machine with a military operation, thereby allowing social rebellion to be classed as both military insubordination and an attack against God. MacDonald asserts the necessity of a social hierarchy, since the fulfilment of each level's social responsibility is vital, not only for the smooth operation of the social machine, but for the sustenance of those who fight on behalf of Heaven. By paralleling the lower levels of the social hierarchy with the herring (and therefore the higher levels with the men who fight for God at Armageddon), MacDonald implicitly claims greater moral capabilities for those in authority, while asserting the necessity of a naturalised moral duty to self-sacrifice on the part of the working classes. He argues that 'the whole economy o' nature is fashiont like that o' the kingdom o' haven: its jist a gradation o' services, an' the highest en' o' ony animal is to contreebute to the life o ane

higher than itsel' (MacDonald, 1875b: II, 9). It is a familiar image in MacDonald's fiction, echoing the fate of the flying fish in MacDonald's 1868 fairy-tale 'The Golden Key'. After guiding a lost girl through the woods to the house of her magical 'grandmother', the fish flies straight into a pot of boiling water, from which it is later served for dinner. When the girl protests, the grandmother explains that 'In Fairyland […] the ambition of the animals is to be eaten by the people; for that is their highest end in that condition. But they are not therefore destroyed. Out of that pot comes something more than the dead fish' (MacDonald, 1867b: 266). When the grandmother lifts the lid of the pot, 'A lovely little creature in human shape, with large white wings, rose out of it' (MacDonald, 1867b: 267). As a reward for its willingness to be boiled alive and eaten by humans, the fish, having fulfilled its 'highest end in that condition', embarks upon a divine after-life.[149]

The image of the vulnerable, disempowered yet holy creature sharply contrasts that of MacDonald's manly characters, whose physical strength reflects their ability to effect moral and social change. Malcolm is introduced as a spiritually innocent but masculine character, who embodies raw strength, certainty and strict self-control. He is identified by the 'obtrusive presence of his arms and legs' – which limbs he fears might 'with some insane and irrepressible flourish, break the Sabbath on their own account' (MacDonald, 1875b: I, 138). His 'highest end' is not to be eaten by his masters, but rather to fight at Armageddon, to impose order and to rule. However, within MacDonald's narratives we are regularly introduced to other male characters whose social and physical vulnerability is represented as a form of spiritual purity, appearing at first sight to frustrate the pervasive muscular Christianity of other novels.

Embracing what Raeper describes as a 'tendency towards saintly androgyny' (Raeper, 1988: 208), the image of the frail, effeminate or androgynous male body occupies a unique status in MacDonald's narratives as at once an ideal of masculinity, and its antithesis. William Thacker argues that characters such as Diamond in *At the Back of the North Wind* result from an amalgamation of 'the best of the feminine and the masculine' (Thacker, 2001: 5), and this is supported by Greville MacDonald's blurring of gender boundaries between his parents: 'If

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[149] A more bizarre example is offered in *Adela Cathcart*, when the narrator discusses fox-hunting. He writes 'I daresay – I hope, at least, that the argument of the fox-hunter is analogically just, who, being expostulated with on the cruelty of fox-hunting, replied "Well, you know, the hounds like it; and the horses like it; and there's no doubt the men like it – and who knows whether the fox doesn't like it too?"' (MacDonald, 1864: III, 269).

I say my mother had beyond most women masculine courage, it is to name her the nobler woman; if I find my father gifted beyond most men with feminine pity, it proclaims him the greater man' (MacDonald, 2005: 388). Greville MacDonald's statement positions the representation of gender-identities as a scale between 'masculine courage' and 'feminine pity', so that Diamond's physical effeminacy becomes a representation of heightened pity and sympathy. According to Greville's words, this should indicate Diamond's 'nobility' and 'greatness', yet his statement over-simplifies the complexities of gender-assignment within a narrative tradition that directly associated muscularity with a manly identity. In *The Manliness of Christ* (1880), Thomas Hughes echoes Greville's conflation of masculinity and courage, yet does so in a way that suggests a similar correlation between physical weakness and cowardice: 'we may perhaps admit (though I should hesitate to do so), that a man with a highly trained and developed body will be more courageous than a weak man' (Hughes, 1907: 33). While Diamond is far from cowardly, his body (like his social morality) remains undeveloped. His long hair, 'girl's looks' and diminutive stature result in the crossing-sweeper Nanny referring to him as 'a kid', despite being of almost the same age (MacDonald, 1871b: 49). Moreover, throughout the narrative Diamond takes pride in the infantilising nick-name of 'God's baby', believing it to be an assertion of his relationship to God rather than an assertion of foolishness (MacDonald, 1871b: 187).

Lisa Hermine Makman takes a different approach when considering the conflicted nature of Diamond's male identity, locating *At the Back of the North Wind* to its place within contemporary debates on child labour and child education (Makman, 1999). She makes the astute observation that at the time of the novel's publication, the name 'Diamond' would have signified both a precious stone and coal (or 'black diamond'), an association strengthened by the that that 'Coleman' is the name of the family employing Diamond's father (Makman, 1999: 119). Her vision of Diamond as a being trapped between child-labour and a transcendental ideal of childhood (one focused on innocence and play rather than economics) draws attention to his body as an unmanly body. Instead, his character is that of a perennial child fated to die before he can develop the manliness and social authority required for his transformation from disempowered victim to muscular patriarch. Roderick McGillis likewise considers the problem of Diamond's androgyny, describing it as a challenge to 'conventional notions of gender' that yet allows MacDonald to 'keep male and female distinctly separate' (McGillis, 2003: 88). While I would question the assertion of a deliberate

attempt to 'queer' our view of masculinity, both critics note the conflict between Diamond's spiritual androgyny and the idealised muscular Christianity of characters such as Harry Armstrong and Malcolm MacPhail. However, in *Robert Falconer* (1868), MacDonald's representation of the similarly androgynous Eric Ericson demonstrates that while the collusion of physical weakness and vulnerability may signal spiritual purity, it is also a counter-productive ideal that articulates hesitancy and impracticality, and one that is therefore not fit for the material world. Between the physical / moral strength of the protagonist (Robert Falconer) and the physical/moral weakness of his stunted companion Shargar, the androgynous poet Eric Ericson completes a tripartite image of masculinity as a spectrum between animal and angel that finds its balance in Robert Falconer as the ideal man. Ericson, like Shargar, is introduced as a physically weak counterpart to the strong and active Falconer, with the exception that whereas Shargar is presented as physically incongruous and disreputable, Ericson is described as a 'repentant angel, sent to earth as a man' who (Miss Letty tells us) is consequently 'ower lang-leggit for this warld' (MacDonald, 1868b: I, 201).

By directly associating Ericson's long legs with the likelihood of death, Miss Letty also associates the shape of his body with a naturalised antagonism to the material world. Later, she mourns that 'he canna live. His feet's ower sma'' (MacDonald, 1868b: I, 201). Between her descriptions of long legs and small feet, we are offered an image of Ericson's physical instability, possessing a tall frame with minimal contact to the material earth. Whereas Shargar's comparable delicacy and smallness of foot articulates the physical and moral weakness consequent to an illegitimate birth, Ericson's frailty becomes a sign of doomed mortality, spiritual purity and naturalised nobility. Rather than being described, like Shargar, as the penniless transient that he in fact is, Ericson is styled by other characters as a 'landless laird' (MacDonald, 1868b: II, 211) separated from his material home by poverty, lack of family, poor health and an introspective nature. His designated class status is confirmed by his 'tall and stately' appearance, and by his visual approximation to a 'Scandinavian chief' resulting from a 'look of command, tempered with patient endurance, in his eagle face' (MacDonald, 1868b: I, 194). While in physical stature and status Ericson appears as a close approximation of the animalistic Shargar, the adjectives that qualify the construction of his body (patient, stately, chief-like, noble) present him as being of a higher station, both socially and spiritually. Moreover, his spiritual standing is corroborated by Biblical allusion. When he walks into Rothieden with blistered feet, Miss Letty bathes his feet in her tears (MacDonald,

1868b: I, 195), creating a parallel between Ericson and Christ by re-enacting Luke 7:44: 'I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head.' However just as Diamond's child-like body keeps him from fully engaging with the material world, so does Ericson's body differentiate him from Falconer's physically and spiritually assured manliness.

Like the soldier of 'The Broken Swords' whose weakness is consequent to an 'over-activity of the inward life' (MacDonald, 1854: 634), MacDonald tells us that Ericson has 'no level channel for the outgoing of the waters of one of the tenderest hearts that ever lived' with the result that 'those waters had sought to break a passage upwards' (MacDonald, 1868b: II, 80). Focused upon spiritual rather than physical development, Ericson's weakness and sickly disposition is once again described as the result of a hypersensitive spirituality that conflicts with material practicality. Comparing the characters of Ericson and Falconer, the narrator informs us that Ericson's 'more fastidious and more instructed nature bred a thousand difficulties which he would meet one by one,' while in contrast Falconer, 'less delicate and more robust, would break through all the oppositions of theological science falsely so called, and take the kingdom of heaven by force' (MacDonald, 1868b: II, 80). Throughout the narrative, Ericson's fastidious yet impractical nature impacts upon his physical health, and creates needless difficulties for those around him. When Falconer breaks a violin string in Aberdeen, Ericson insists on walking through the rain to try and find a replacement. However, being 'clearly unfit for such a walk' Ericson collapses with fever, leaving Falconer and Shargar to carry his body home (MacDonald, 1868b: II, 78). Even the blistered feet that lead Miss Letty to create a parallel between Ericson's body and Christ, are described as the result of his own stubborn nature. When invited into the inn, he resists, determined to carry on walking, until a companion remarks 'Ye ken yerr feet are sae blistered ye can hardly put ane by the ither.--It was a' we cud du, mem, to get him alang the last mile' (MacDonald, 1868b: I, 193). While repeatedly described as superior to Falconer, Ericson's lack of material practicality and social awareness means that in terms of social masculinity, he is lacking. Like Diamond, he is in a state of transition, unable to develop physical masculinity and both moral and physical strength while the 'outgoing of the waters' of his tender heart continues to feed the spiritual body at the expense of the physical (MacDonald, 1868b: II, 80).

The antagonism between these androgynous characters and the material world is explored by James Eli Adams in *Dandies and Desert Saints* (1995), in which Adams argues that the form of the saintly androgyne originates with the Carlylean prophet: 'a figure of masculine vocation defined in antagonism to the market-place' (Adams, 1995: 25). In the case of Diamond and Ericson, this theory is corroborated by the fact that MacDonald was profoundly influenced by Carlyle, as were many sympathisers with the Christian Socialist movement. Indeed, in October 1843, Frederick Denison Maurice felt compelled to defend Carlyle against a negative review of *On Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History* (1841), claiming 'deep obligation' to Carlyle's works (Seigel, 1971: 193). However, there is a distinct difference between MacDonald's portrayal of the androgynous 'prophet' figure after 1868, and that of Carlyle in 1841.

While Carlyle contrasts his prophet with the fashionable 'dandy' – a social simulacrum who constructs his identity according to the theatre of public opinion – MacDonald's androgynous characters are far from idealised constructs. Embodiments of social exile, Diamond and Ericson are instead defenceless innocents rendered vulnerable to the material world through their inability either to comprehend or change it.[150] As such, we are constantly reminded that the androgynous characters in MacDonald's narratives exist in a state of transition, between childhood and masculine development in the material world, or else between childhood and death. Being 'ower lang-leggit for this warld' and 'too good to live', both Ericson and Diamond suffer consumptive illnesses and die (MacDonald, 1868b: I, 201). Despite their apparently idealised spirituality, they represent an unworkable construction of masculinity – one that, as Adams indicates, is 'in some way supplementary to or divergent from normative manhood', and which must therefore give way to a muscular and robustly enduring archetype (Adams, 1995: 26).

Completing this narrative, the later androgynous characters of Gilbert Galbraith (*Sir Gibbie*, 1879) and Clare Skymer (*A Rough Shaking*, 1890) grow successful in their respective societies, and through social success, articulate a fully developed masculinity. Gibbie's development from diminutive 'street-sparrow' to 'handsome youth' is supported by the

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[150] That this vulnerability is a uniquely feminine quality is emphasised by the way in which MacDonald's feminine characters are persistently isolated from the material world, and from material contact. See Chapter 6: Unmuscular Christianity – Obfuscating Femininity.

revelation of his noble ancestry and large inheritance. The latter facilitating both Gibbie's social education and urban philanthropy, his growth towards manliness articulates a unification of social, spiritual and material development that culminates in marriage to his cousin, Ginevra Galbraith. Likewise, while his adoptive father fears that the androgynously-named Clare Skymer may not be 'manly, but of too gently sad behaviour', the physical demands of labour, homelessness and domestic responsibility lead him to become 'a man of more than ordinary strength and vigour' (MacDonald, 1891b: 97). Despite intense social hardship, Clare's assumption of contemporary masculine status concludes with martial victory as Captain of a gunboat in Genoa.

Having established the saintly androgyne as an unworkable ideal of masculinity, I shall now look at the way in which MacDonald's later androgynous characters are able to channel their spiritual natures into the development of social practicality, thereby gaining physical power together with their ability to influence the world around them. This narrative structure is contextualised by the on-going debates regarding the manliness of ideological labour and spiritual faith that culminate in Thomas Hughes's decision to publish *The Manliness of Christ.*

The Manliness of Christ

In *A Rough Shaking*, Clare's development of physical strength (and manliness) is described as a consequence of a rigorous work ethic, wherein he realises that 'men who would be men must work' (MacDonald, 1891b: 116). At this point, the narrator informs us that Clare is 'in process of being changed from a dreamer to a man', thereby emphasising the role of labour in the development of the masculine identity and characterising the dreamer as a precursor to manliness, able to envisage the ideal yet unable to translate those dreams into material actions (MacDonald, 1891b: 116). He clarifies, 'It is a good thing to be a dreamer, but it is a bad thing indeed to be *only* a dreamer', and therefore opens a point of communication between Clare Skymer and Diamond in *At the Back of the North Wind* (MacDonald, 1891b: 116). When North Wind describes a poet sitting in a motionless boat, she claims that one part of her work is to stir him to action. When she blows, the narrator tells us that 'The boat flew over the rippling water. Man and boat and river were awake' (MacDonald, 1871b: 62). Like

the poet, Diamond's experience of the North Wind stirs him to wakefulness; we are told that 'His head was full of the dream he had dreamed; but it did not make him neglect his work, for his work was not to dig stars but to drive old Diamond and pick up fares' (MacDonald, 1871b: 243). However, despite his willingness to engage in work, Diamond (like Ericson) remains primarily a dreamer, eventually giving up work as his life is consumed by the dreams / fever-spells of his travels with North Wind.

Reviewing Tennyson's *The Princess* (1847), Sedgwick argues that 'in the eyes of those who actually enjoyed hegemonic privilege [...] poet's work and women's work fell in the same ornamental, angelic and negligible class' (Sedgwick, 1993: 133).[151] In MacDonald's representations of Diamond, Clare Skymer and Eric Ericson as 'working' dreamers, we see reflected his anxiety to create an interdependent relationship between poetry, manliness and work – thereby resolving 'the specific homosocial anxieties of the male middle class intellectual' (Sedgwick, 1993: 72). In doing so, MacDonald reconstructs an argument previously seen in *Adela Cathcart*, in which ideological labour becomes indicative of a higher form of masculinity. Recalling the curate Ralph Armstrong's desire to 'sacrifice my thews on the altar of my faith', MacDonald appears to defend the mental labour of poets, dreamers, philanthropists and educators from any charge of effeminacy so long as their labour has a practical benefit (MacDonald, 1864a: II, 22). Indeed, McGillis asserts that 'for MacDonald the ideal poet is Jesus', and reinforces his argument with the observation that 'Many, if not all, of MacDonald's works are about the making of a poet' (McGillis, 2003: 94). This is corroborated in the essay 'The Child in the Midst' when MacDonald attempts to unify the apparently divergent images of Christ as a masculine and spiritual ideal: 'Grand and strong beyond all that human imagination can conceive of poet-thinking and kingly action, he is delicate beyond all that human tenderness can conceive of husband or wife, homely beyond all that human heart can conceive of father or mother' (MacDonald, 1867c: 21).

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[151] *The Princess* is the rather perplexing story of Princess Ida, who isolates herself from the world of men and proceeds to establish a university for women. Although men are forbidden entry, a group of men (including the prince she had been betrothed to) gain access to the university disguised as women. When they are discovered, a battle is fought in which the men are wounded. The women of the university nurse them back to health and accept them in marriage, thus breaking down the barrier between men and women and relocating themselves within the domestic structure that they had previously abjured.

First, MacDonald unifies the poet and the king under the description 'grand and strong', but the qualifiers poet-*thinking* and kingly *action* mark a divide between the poetic identity and muscular manliness. MacDonald asserts that the poetic nature encompasses grandeur and strength, and implicitly also suggests that the poet has right of authority in transcendental matters, just as the king has right of authority in national matters. Strengthening this division between poetic and muscular manliness, MacDonald goes on to translate the diminutive stature of his poetic heroes into the emotional tenderness of 'father or mother', concluding his argument by asserting that Christ's manliness was internalised and independent of form: 'Our Lord became flesh, but did not *become* man. He took on him the form of man: he was man already' (MacDonald, 1867c: 21; 19). As such, Christ becomes the epitome of spiritual, poetic masculinity while in the body of a child, yet as the poetic is reinforced by the kingly identity (and the ability to assert authority within the material world), his body takes on the 'form of man'. Moreover, the passage follows a hypothetical argument between MacDonald and his reader, with the reader apparently arguing that Christ's childlike and divine nature separates him from common humanity. MacDonald responds by characterising Christ as sublimated masculinity, countering both suggestions of unmanliness and the concept that Christ represents a divine – and therefore unattainable – ideal of humanity.

In later years, MacDonald's argument would be echoed by many of his contemporaries. In *The Manliness of Christ* (1880) Thomas Hughes would famously decry the growing perception of conflict between Christianity and masculinity, criticising the popular opinion that Young Men's Christian Associations 'lack manliness, and the want of manliness is attributed to their avowed profession of Christianity' (Hughes, 1907: 14). As Adams contends, 'the very fact that Hughes would feel obliged to defend the 'manliness' of Christ points to the increasing friction between Victorian manhood and traditional Christian virtues' (Adams, 1995: 34). However, despite MacDonald's ambiguous desire to defend the spiritual / poetic masculinity of his androgynous characters in 1866, the developing physical masculinity of Sir Gibbie and Clare Skymer (together with the physical decline of Diamond and Eric Ericson) suggests that MacDonald found it difficult to square his arguments with a mass readership that increasingly associated male effeminacy with the self-denial of asceticism, and later with the sensuality of Pater's aestheticism and the Decadents.

The publication of Pater's *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* in 1873 (and the later publication of its conclusion in 1888) marked a shift away from the purpose-driven art of the Pre-Raphaelites and the Arts and Crafts Movement so vehemently defended by John Ruskin, introducing a growing wave of aestheticism with the call of 'art for art's sake'. Moreover, it was to evolve into a new representation of masculine identity – an exploration of divergent masculinities, rather than the imposed ideal of manliness. The dissociation of 'meaning' and 'manliness' represented a potent threat against the power-structures of the Victorian status-quo, disrupting ideals of family, work and authority with the concept that society existed in a state of moral and temporal disintegration, focused around the removal of power and agency from individual identity. Looking back to the renaissance and representations of Ancient Greece, Pater articulated the impermanence of society, and the consequent value of living for the sake of transient moments of pleasure and beauty. His representations of male beauty – an almost homoerotic Hellenism – were echoed by the later works of Aesthetic and Decadent writers such as John Addington Symonds, Oscar Wilde and Algernon Charles Swinburne (Dowling, 1994).[152]

The rise of aestheticism is seldom explicitly discussed in MacDonald's narratives, yet he was well aware of the movement; in 1877, John Ruskin likewise became a victim of the changing artistic scene when the artist Whistler sued him for libel, on the grounds that a negative review of his *Nocturne in Black and Gold: The Falling Rocket* in *Fors Clavigera* had damaged his artistic reputation.[153] Ruskin's reaction to aestheticism is scarcely surprising; after all, he had championed the Pre-Raphaelites (who looked for 'truth in beauty'), and had an artistic philosophy that was strongly critical of sensuality in art. Writing in 1872 he had stated his marked preference for Wordsworth over Swinburne, declaring the 'White Doe of Rylstone' to be 'better for breakfast than Swinburne is for supper' (Ruskin, 1872, August 14). Years earlier, he had outlined his opinions to MacDonald, writing, 'I wholly feel with you that the harm done by ignoring them [the passions] has been fearful. But I think that they ought to be approached in a graver and grander manner – that fairy tales – and everything calculated for readers under 14 or 15, should be wholly free of every sexual thought' (Ruskin, 1863, n.d). By 1886, Ruskin was so disgusted with the artistic atmosphere that he decided to

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[152] See, for example, Symonds's *A Problem in Greek Ethics* (1883) and 'The Legend of Apollo' (1895), or Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890).
[153] The trial was highly publicised, yet was not reported on favourably for either party. In the end, the jury found in favour of Whistler, but set the damages at a mere farthing.

stop writing on the subject of art, exclaiming that it was now 'in the upholsterers and harlots hands' (Ruskin, 1886, May 15). Public sentiment likewise grew more extreme after the passing of the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1885 (containing the controversial Labouchere amendment) under which Oscar Wilde was convicted for 'homosexual acts' in 1895. Discourses relating to aestheticism and the Decadents became firmly associated with homosexuality, while homosexuality – historically associated with bestiality and sexual violence through the 1828 and 1861 Offences Against the Person Acts (White, 1999: 3; 26; 28; Cook, 2003: 42) – became simultaneously linked with hedonism. Wilde's conviction provoked hysteria in the media as the convicting judge accused Wilde and his co-defendant of preying upon vulnerable boys by encouraging them into 'giving their bodies, or selling them, to other men for the purpose of sodomy' (Dowling, 1994: 190).[154] While there is little evidence of such a 'homosexual panic' in MacDonald's narratives, the influence of Aestheticism and Decadence can be seen in texts published after *The Renaissance,* when we see a sharper distinction in the moral categorisation of gender characteristics, so that MacDonald's heroic characters become more 'manly', while his villains (such as Lord Miekleham and the Marquis in *Malcolm*) become effeminate.[155]

The evolving tension between effeminate asceticism and effeminate decadence is thrown into relief by the novel *What's Mine's Mine* (1886) when the mercenary and foolish Peregrine Palmer points to asceticism as evidence that 'All the pith is leaking out of our young men. In another generation we shall have neither soldiers nor sailors nor statesmen!' (MacDonald, 1886: II, 53). His complaint is strikingly reminiscent of the cultural crisis that engulfed the ideal of manliness in the years following the outbreak of the Crimean War. However, just as the soldier of 'The Broken Swords' demonstrates that want of 'pith' is no inhibition to martial or masculine prowess, so is Peregrine Palmer's assertion ridiculed by the heroic and manly brothers Alister and Ian Macruadh. Palmer goes on to assert that 'it is necessary to manhood that men when they are young should drink a little, gamble a little, and sow a few

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[154]Mr Justice Wills's sentencing speech referred to Wilde as being guilty of 'extensive corruption of the most hideous kind among young men' (White, 1999: 59), which *The Star* took as justification for commenting (on 27th May 1885) that the Wilde trials should be taken as a lesson for 'all others who are responsible for the morals, of public schools. It rests with them, more probably, than with anybody else, to exorcise this pestilence' (White, 1999: 60).

[155] Both Alan Sinfield and David Newsome argue that this transition in the categorisation of 'effeminacy' marked a shift in cultural representations of manhood, noting that while Coleridge had defined manhood as a state of maturity (opposing it to childishness), by the time of Thomas Hughes manliness was instead held in opposition to effeminacy (Newsome, 1961: 36; Sinfield, 1994: 62).

wild oats - as necessary as that a nation should found itself by the law of the strongest' (MacDonald, 1886: II, 54). He concludes that those who refuse to follow such a life (he identifies the clergy as an example) are 'hardly to be counted men' (MacDonald, 1886: II, 54).

Mr Palmer's decision to parallel the development of his idea of manhood with the development of a source of national strength should not be ignored, and is upheld by the horrified reactions of Alister and Ian. They tell him firmly that his 'doctrine does not enter willing ears', and challenge him with the representation of a dystopia in which 'God made woman to be the slave of man [...] that a man might caress and despise her' (MacDonald, 1886: II, 56). Ian contradicts Mr. Palmer's statement that 'the law of the strongest' should be the law of national development, arguing, 'Must not the lower laws be subject to the higher? It is a law—for ever broken, yet eternal—that a man is his brother's keeper: still more must he be his sister's keeper. Therein is involved all civilization, all national as well as individual growth' (MacDonald, 1886: II, 56). In doing so, he deftly associates the gender and class hierarchies with a moral scale, leaving Palmer's arguments to betray 'the bad blood in his breeding' (MacDonald, 1886: II, 55). However, MacDonald's argument here is once again conflicted. While it is clear that Mr. Palmer's social class is not an articulation of morality (his status being purely material), the social status of MacDonald's heroes – as the possessors of patriarchally-ordained titles – become an assertion of fatherhood, manliness and corroborative spirituality.

Manliness and Social / Spiritual Evolution

Descended from the laird of Clan Macruadh, both Alister and Ian are possessed of a social status that is not contingent on wealth, but rather on lineage. Under the patriarchal system of Clan rule, Alister (the laird) holds the position of 'father' to his social collective, and as such articulates the moral values required for domestic stability. The brothers shun the concept of 'the law of the strong' by assuming the existence of a world in which the 'lower laws' must be 'subject to the higher' (MacDonald, 1886: II, 56). While clearly discussing the relationship between conscience and instinct, they support their claim by declaring that a man must more 'his sister's keeper' than his brother's, for the sake of 'national as well as individual growth'

(MacDonald, 1886: II, 56) . The outcome of both systems of male development – asceticism and decadence – therefore appears to be the assumption of control over women, with the distinguishing factor being the qualities that the controlling man will demand and represent. While Ian and Alister envision a world in which women look up to men as their patriarchs – their spiritual and familial leaders – Mr. Palmer declares that 'A fellow that will neither look at a woman nor drink his glass, is not cut out for man's work in the world!' (MacDonald, 1886: II, 55). His point is emphasised by the somewhat androgynous and tender-hearted 'Rob of the Angels' – a 'very pale', slender young man whose gray eyes 'looked dreamy, and seemed almost careless of what passed before them' (MacDonald, 1886: II, 22).

Like Diamond in *At the Back of the North Wind*, Rob appears more of a child than a man, despite being almost thirty (MacDonald, 1886: II, 22). As with Diamond, Rob's lack of external manliness is not taken as a failure of any 'right condition of heart', but rather of antagonism to the material world. His disconnection is made evident by the way in which he holds himself separate from social events, sitting on the outskirts of a clan feast with his deaf/dumb father ('Hector of the Stags'), observing the movements of his collective rather than participating in any way. As a result, MacDonald informs us that Rob has a 'far-away look' that would have indicated idiocy to a 'common glance' or to a 'lowland parish', yet which led in the mountains to his being 'looked upon as a seer, one in communion with higher powers' (MacDonald, 1886: II, 23).

Exiled from both their spiritual and social collectives (as moral children in an amoral environment, and as middle class or aristocratic children experiencing life as homeless or impoverished individuals), MacDonald's androgynous and visionary characters are repeatedly paralleled with Christ as those who, antagonistic to the material world, yet remain true to their spiritual ideal. When Clare Skymer is apparently orphaned during an earthquake in *A Rough Shaking*, his connection to Christ is demonstrated when Mrs. Porson carries him away from the wreckage on a donkey. While riding, she dreams that she is 'Mary with the holy thing in her arms, fleeing to Egypt on the ass, with Joseph, her husband, walking by her side' (MacDonald, 1891b: 52).

Raeper argues that MacDonald's androgynous characters 'become types of Christ, sufferers and redeemers,' thereby articulating an association between spirituality and social suffering (Raeper, 1988: 294). Each character's vulnerability to the material world is expressed through physical distress, whether in the form of sickness, poverty, or injury consequent to social injustice. Ericson's poor health is exacerbated by 'thae greedy gleds (kites) o' professors' who, together with the merchants, live upon 'the verra blude and banes o' sair-vroucht students!' (MacDonald, 1868b: I, 196). More explicitly, in *Sir Gibbie*, the mute child Gibbie is stripped naked and whipped by a laird's gamekeeper for performing house-work without permission[156], and for failing to justify his actions (on account of being unable to speak). Both his innocence and his vulnerability are asserted by MacDonald's comment that he stood before the gamekeeper 'in helpless nakedness, smiling still: he had never done anything shameful, therefore had no acquaintance with shame' (MacDonald, 1879a: I, 282). As with the washing of Ericson's feet in *Robert Falconer,* MacDonald's use of biblical allusion in this passage is prolific. While Gibbie's unashamed nakedness recalls the association of unashamed nudity and innocence in Genesis, so do the injuries received from the whipping assert a correlation between Gibbie and Christ. These injuries, which form 'a great cross marked in two cruel stripes on his back,' lead Janet Grant to wonder whether 'the Lord was still, child and man, suffering for his race, to deliver his brothers and sisters from their sins?' (MacDonald, 1879a: I, 304; 305). By associating these androgynous characters with Christ, MacDonald appears to assert that the materialism of contemporary society is incompatible with a traditionally Christ-like identity. Recalling the conflict between financial remuneration and 'sublime work' discussed in previous chapters[157], Eric Ericson, Sir Gibbie and Clare Skymer are by stages stripped of all material possessions, with Gibbie and Clare in particular becoming tramps and embracing the natural world in place of a material world that has contributed to their victimisation.

In *Sir Gibbie,* the protagonist's uncontaminated nature is emphasised when he runs, naked, from the gamekeeper's whip. Ignorant of his aristocratic status and future inheritance, we are told that 'Sir Gibbie, though not much poorer than he had been, really possessed nothing separable, except his hair and his nails – nothing therefore that he could call *his*, as distinguished from *him*' (MacDonald, 1879a: I, 290). At once mute, penniless and orphaned,

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[156] Again, a distinctly feminine action that draws attention to Gibbie's early androgyny.
[157] See Chapter 2: Class and Employment – Manliness in the Workplace.

Gibbie is alienated from an urban environment underpinned by commercial principles. Rendered homeless by his father's death, he quickly learns to avoid the urban philanthropists who attempt to civilize him by restricting his freedom. Even when he finds friendship and temporary accommodation with Sambo, a sailor with 'immense muscular power' and 'dark, radiant eyes', the contact ends in tragedy (MacDonald, 1879a: I, 109). When Sambo unintentionally offends a Malaysian sailor, it precipitates a fight during which Gibbie is hurt. Angered by Gibbie's injury, Sambo attacks and knocks all of the participants to the floor. That night, Gibbie witnesses Sambo's murder. In a grotesque parallel between the sailor's dead body and his own natural muteness, Gibbie perceives that Sambo 'had two red mouths now, but was not able to speak a word with either!' (MacDonald, 1879a: I, 114). Grieving and terrified, Gibbie runs away from the successive persecutions of 'the awful city' and seeks refuge in the scantily populated Daurside on the mountain of Glashgar (MacDonald, 1879a: I, 114). Here, Gibbie's body becomes synonymous with the natural world, and begins to articulate a harmony with nature that MacDonald characterises as the development of religious faith and the acceptance of divine will. Just as Diamond learns a form of natural morality (combined with the almost Darwinian principle of development through adversity) when travelling with the North Wind, so does Gibbie come to understand his father's drunken Bible-readings through his exposure to the natural world.

From being a 'street-sparrow' in the city, Gibbie assumes numerous animalistic forms in the country. He spends one night in a kennel with a friendly dog; he drinks from a spilled milk-pail 'like a calf'; he wears animal skins, and is described as a 'beast-loon' by the local inhabitants (MacDonald, 1879a: I, 130). Indeed, we are told that since becoming a wanderer, Gibbie classes himself as an animal.[158] Even his whipping by the game-keeper is foretold in animalistic terms when Gibbie associates himself with a hedgehog. While wishing that 'he had a suit made all of great pins', Gibbie is horrified to see that same hedgehog – apparently so well defended – killed by a driver's whip (MacDonald, 1879a: I, 153). Initially, the natural world comforts Gibbie's 'disappointment with his kind', yet his sadness returns when he sees a dog attacking a rabbit (MacDonald, 1879a: I, 158). Regretfully, he concedes the Darwinian 'natural law' by saying 'Ilka cratur 'at can […] ates ilka cratur 'at canna!' (MacDonald, 1879a: I, 158). However, MacDonald assures the reader that within a few years, Gibbie

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[158] 'He had still the notion uncorrected, that things in the country belonged to nobody in particular, and were mostly for the use of animals, with which, since he became a wanderer, he had almost come to class himself' (MacDonald, 1879a: I, 152).

would come to qualify this naturalistic perspective with social morality, saying 'But the man 'at wad be a man, he maunna' (MacDonald, 1879a: I, 159).

Gibbie's relationship to the natural world is interesting, in that like Diamond's benevolent/merciless North Wind, we are presented with two contrasting perspectives of the natural world. Likewise, his famous 1867 essay 'The Imagination: Its Functions and Its Culture', MacDonald would claim that 'all is God's; and the man who is growing into harmony with His will, is growing into harmony with himself' (MacDonald, 1893). However, in *A Rough Shaking* this 'faithfully reflected macrocosm of God's will' is brutally contrasted with Naturalism's impartial, anti-theological force based around Darwinian natural selection. MacDonald was a keen follower of Darwin, praising *The Voyage of the Beagle* in an 1845 letter to his father (Sadler, 1994: 12). Like Charles Kingsley, MacDonald refused to believe that the theories of natural selection and evolution contained any conflict with Christianity. Indeed, Greville MacDonald describes MacDonald as a proponent of 'ethical Evolution [...] long before he knew anything of the *Descent of Man* or the *Origin of Species* (MacDonald, 2005: 217). Like Charles Kingsley's *The Water-Babies*, narratives such as *The Princess and the Goblin* (1872) and *The Princess and Curdie* (1883) rewrite evolution as a spiritual process whereby 'a person's sins might determine that person's outward shape in another life' (Manlove, 1990: 141; Straley, 2007: 584). In *The Princess and Curdie* (1883), we are told that 'it is always what they do, whether in their minds or their bodies, that makes men go down to be less than men, that is, beasts' (MacDonald, 1888b: 73). Curdie learns that the change is most clearly discerned through contact with the hands – the metaphorical facilitators of action – and is therefore granted the ability to tell at the touch of a hand, which animal a man is in the process of becoming. Moreover, in *Thomas Wingfold, Curate* (1876) MacDonald holds up the rhetoric of eugenics to decry the horror of evolution in an atheistic world.[159] This polarised representation of nature (as at once theological ideal and Darwinian force) is superficially resolved by the depiction of North Wind as benevolently harsh (invoking the principles of the Charitable Organisation Society), yet Gibbie's gentle animalism remains a marked contrast to the bestiality of rebellious or non-idealised characters.

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[159] For a deeper discussion on MacDonald's use of the eugenics debate, see page The extremity

Just as Gibbie's embrace of the natural world denotes his resistance to contaminating or divisive social principles, so is the protagonist of *A Rough Shaking* introduced as one whose love of nature translates to unification through subordination. As the narrator approaches Clare Skymer's house, he hears that 'The earth and the grass and the trees and the air were together weaving a harmony, and the birds were leading in the big orchestra […] Presently, to complete the score, I heard the tones of a man's voice' (MacDonald, 1891b: 14). However, the same narrative later uses natural imagery (in the form of the animal body) to articulate the self-destructive danger of class-based rebellion.

When Clare sees a bull struggling against its keepers in a menagerie, he realises that 'it must have tortured him to pull those strong men by the cartilage of his nose, but he was in too great a rage to feel it' (MacDonald, 1891b: 237). Injured as a result of his own disobedience, the bull represents a threat both to his own body, and to the bodies of those around him. The class-parallel is made apparent when the bull contorts his body, with the result that 'every other moment his hoofs would be higher than his head,' indicating a chaotic reversal of the highest and the lowest (MacDonald, 1891b: 237). As the struggle continues, other animals noted for either violence, cruelty or mimicry join the rebellion: 'The roaring and yelling of lion, tiger, and leopard, the laughter of hyena, the howling of jackal, and the snarling of bear, mingled in hideous dissonance with the cries of monkeys and parrots' (MacDonald, 1891b: 238). The inclusion of the monkeys and parrots, with their association with human bodies and voices, creates a parallel between the rebellion of animals and humans. This association is confirmed when Clare sees a bear fighting against its chains. Despite the pity that the protagonist feels for the bear, tied by a 'chain […] so short that it held the poor creature's head within about a foot of the floor,' we are reminded that 'had his nose been set free, such a raging-bear-struggle to get at the nearest of his fellow-prisoners would have ensued, as must soon have torn to shreds the partition between them' (MacDonald, 1891b: 257).

The bear's anger and violent rebellion threatens the safety of those around him, yet his struggles are merely the displaced social struggles of his carer – a socially envious man called Glum Gunn who, furious at the apparent ease of Clare's social advancement, later appears to murder Clare's devoted dog Abdiel. Watching the bear struggle, the narrator wonders, 'What if spirits worse than their own get into some of the creatures by virtue of the likeness between

them!' (MacDonald, 1891b: 258). He later emphasises the connection between the bear and Glum Gunn by asserting that 'in some mysterious way Glum Gunn and the bear were own brothers' (MacDonald, 1891b: 273). In the same way that Gunn grows vicious in jealousy over Clare's success, the bear is depicted struggling against a chain that is too short for its height, wounding itself and threatening others in its anger. Couched in imagery reminiscent of contemporary descriptions of Chartist 'Monster Meetings' the bear appears as a metaphor for the working classes, fighting against the social chains that bind them to their position (Hall, 1994: 51). MacDonald is therefore able to assert the inherent danger in rebelling against one's social position, and to demonstrate that hardship suffered is a far better fate for the social collective, than the liberty that would result from rebellion.

The social dynamic behind the construction of the dangerous and aggressive animal body contrasts the innocent vulnerability of both Gibbie and Clare, whose animal-like bodies appear to associate a Christ-like spiritual ideal with alienation from the worlds of commerce and trade. Indeed, like Adams, Kristen Guest notes that the latter half of the Victorian period saw an increase in narratives in which positioned a vulnerable hero against the economic realities of the period (Guest, 2007: 635; Adams, 1995: 25). In doing so, she describes 'an emerging crisis in which middle class male subjects are expected to participate in an increasingly aggressive and competitive Capitalist economy, even as long-established standards of private, moral rectitude remain in force' (Guest, 2007: 635). In MacDonald's narratives, the conflict is enhanced by the naturalised status of these impoverished victims, who on development of manliness are in many cases revealed as wealthy heirs and champions of the status quo, refusing the very change in social order that their gender- and class-based victimhood (revealed by androgyny and poverty) would initially seem to encourage. Just as the ensign's body (particularly his hands) articulates a social status that is disguised by his presence in a factory in 'The Broken Swords', so is the class-status of the impoverished Gibbie and Clare inscribed on the same bodies that advocate submission and quiescence.

At the beginning of the narrative, Gibbie is introduced as 'a child, apparently about six, but in reality about eight […] on his knees raking with both hands in the grey dirt of the kennel' (MacDonald, 1879a: I, 2). His entire physical description attests to his status as impoverished

nobility; like Shargar in *Robert Falconer*, Gibbie has 'nicely shaped little legs, and the feet were dainty' (MacDonald, 1879a: I, 6). However, at the same time they are 'dirty, red and rough' (MacDonald, 1879a: I, 6). Similarly, his face is described as 'not very clean, and not too regular for hope of a fine development', while his 'red-gold' hair is 'sunburned into a sort of human hay' (MacDonald, 1879a: I, 3). These physical descriptions are translated into a form of social morality in which he never desires anything that he is unable to afford. Looking through the window of a bakery, he ignores the cakes and buns to focus on the penny-loaves, on the grounds that 'sometimes he did have a penny' (MacDonald, 1879a: I, 8). MacDonald assures us that this ethic is 'our first window into the ordered nature of the child' since 'lawless as he looked, the desires of the child were moderate' (MacDonald, 1879a: I, 8).

Like his body, Gibbie's social morality is described as unusual for his apparent class, indicating that not only the shape of his body, but his social morality, is a gift of his aristocratic lineage. The qualifiers indicating Gibbie's social and moral nobility are essential for corroborating his physical build when we come to contrast Gibbie's body with that of Clare's thieving and callous companion Tommy. Despite being couched in negative language that attests to Tommy's untrustworthy nature, his physical description is notable for its parallels to the above description of Gibbie:

> He was a miserable creature, bare-footed and bare-legged; about eight years of age, but so stunted that to the first glance he looked less than six – with keen ferret eyes in red rims, red hair, pasty, freckled complexion, and a generally unhealthy look (MacDonald, 1891b: 99).

In Tommy's case (as in the initial description of Shargar in *Robert Falconer*), poor clothing, diminutive stature and red hair allude to an untrustworthy character, failing to be off-set by the characteristics that attest to Gibbie's secret nobility.

Sir Gibbie is one of a number of 'hidden identity' narratives within the latter half of MacDonald's oeuvre – two other notable examples being the *Malcolm* (1875) and the *There*

and Back (1891). A hallmark of such narratives is their tendency to allude to the mystery of the protagonist's birth through their highly-developed morality, and the consequent growing awareness that they have 'good blood' (MacDonald, 1875b: II, 185). Even the working-class Diamond is placed on a moral pedestal amongst his contemporaries on the grounds that 'There are not many people who can think about beautiful things and do common work at the same time. But then there are not many people who have been to the back of the north wind' (MacDonald, 1871b: 243). His exceptional nature is further demonstrated by a heightened refinement (consequent to the lessons of North Wind), which renders him attractive to his circle of middle class male friends (Wood, 1993: 116).

This correlation between Diamond's apparent rarity and his promulgation of a strong work-ethic is problematic for those who claim that MacDonald challenges social conventions. Diamond's humble origins are echoed in the status of Gibbie and Clare as orphaned tramps, and of Malcolm MacPhail as orphaned fisherman. Each of these characters embrace Diamond's work ethic and succeed in their labours with a corresponding rise in status – apparently asserting that similar self-improvement is within the capabilities of any individual in like circumstances. However, MacDonald simultaneously insists that Diamond's behaviour is consequent to his time at the back of the North Wind.

In *Malcolm, Sir Gibbie* and *A Rough Shaking*, a similar rarity of character becomes a depiction of their true class status. Particularly noticeable in *A Rough Shaking*, Clare's success is dependent upon people's perception of him as separable from the class he apparently represents. Frequently, Clare succeeds as a result of a perception, based upon his body, clothing and speech, that he is a member of the middle class. In one instance a man saves Clare from being labelled a thief, his belief in Clare's innocence being purely based upon his impression of the boy's middle class upbringing: 'He saw that Clare's clothes had been made for a boy in good circumstances, though they had been long worn, and were much begrimed. His face, his tone, his speech convinced him that they had been made for *him*, and that he had had a gentle breeding' (MacDonald, 1891b: 123). In turn, Clare supports this assumption with the repeated assertion that he is not a tramp in the usual meaning of the word. When questioned about Tommy, Clare answers:

'No, sir; he's not any relation of mine. He's a tramp.'

'And what are you?'

'Something like one now, sir, but I wasn't always' (MacDonald, 1891b: 213).

Despite their apparent origins among the working or homeless classes, these characters are possessed of a disguised class-status expressed as a 'touch of rarity' that separates them from their contemporaries. Like the working-class aristocrat Malcolm, they describe obedience and submission as a moral imperative, yet all the while occupy the class-status of those who should be obeyed.

Malcolm is introduced as a spiritually innocent but masculine character, whose physical appearance embodies raw strength, certainty and strict self-control. His subordinate yet passionate character is depicted through an association of physical strength, self-control and an innate work-ethic, whereby his physical body instinctively desires to labour regardless of social disapproval (MacDonald, 1875b: I, 138). In contrast to Robert Falconer, Malcolm's strength is not 'reposeful'; he feels the need to 'restrain' his arms and legs, and far from being possessed of 'quiet authority', Malcolm has a 'long, swinging, heavy-footed stride' that conveys an appearance of strength, certainty and power (MacDonald, 1875b: I, 33; MacDonald, 1863: III, 91). As with Clare Skymer and Sir Gibbie, Malcolm's body and physical interactions separate him from his social collective, particularly in respect of his manner of walking, which is 'unlike that of other men of the place, who always walked slowly, and never but on dire compulsion ran' (MacDonald, 1875b: I, 33). In this contrast, it appears that Malcolm is an exception to his social collective, who are thus characterised as weak and hesitant, and consequently lacking authority.

Malcolm's masculinity is described as manly virility tightly controlled by will and obedience, and this image is strengthened when the narrator informs us that 'Malcolm had early learned that a man's will must, like a true monarch, rule down every rebellious movement of its subjects' (MacDonald, 1875b: II, 166). In this passage, Malcolm's control over his body is likened to that of a patriarchal leader over society – providing an indication to his secret class status while also paralleling the physical authority of Robert Falconer over first Shargar, then

the inhabitants of the London slums. Possessed of passion and authority (revealed in his body's willingness to break free of his control, and in his physical ability to assert his will), Malcolm nevertheless embraces the qualities of self-control and servility, thereby justifying both his position as fisherman/manservant, and later as Marquis. However, the language used to describe Malcolm's powerful physique also serves to imply a powerful nature, comprising certitude and a natural tendency towards leadership. This is demonstrated during the pacification of his rebellious mare, Kelpie, at which point the Marquis asserts that Malcolm has 'good blood in him, however he came by it' (MacDonald, 1875b: II, 185). His subjugation of Kelpie (as a rebellious mare being physically compelled to obey her master), together with the Marquis's assertion of his 'good blood', reinforces an association between masculine strength, innate leadership and an inevitably noble birth.

Malcolm's body therefore becomes both the means and the articulation of his natural capacity to rule, existing as a common anchor between the paralleled hierarchies of spirit and society. The consequent association between spirit and class is resolved by MacDonald's re-working of class as patriarchy – a device also seen in the later *What's Mine's Mine,* in which the class-system is re-imagined as a domestic network with the laird as 'father' over all. When MacDonald explains Malcolm's reverence for social position, he justifies it by naming patriarchy as the closest system of rule to the kingdom of heaven (MacDonald, 1875b: II, 147). Moreover, just as the 'Christian Tragedy' culminates in a return to the Father – both domestic and spiritual – Malcolm's subordination to 'the marquis's high position' (in his position as manservant) is clearly distinguished from the love of social class exhibited by other, non-idealised characters. MacDonald comments, 'whether the subordination of class shall go to the development of reverence or of servility, depends mainly on the individual nature subordinated' (MacDonald, 1875b: II, 150).

For Malcolm, reverence of the marquis is both figuratively and literally a reverence for patriarchy, with his eventual assumption of the title (on discovery that he is the marquis's son) equating to the assumption of both patriarchal and social status. Malcolm's near-feudalist beliefs, which render him determined to obey those in a position of power over him (in the words of his friend Mr. Graham) 'as the decree of Heaven' (MacDonald, 1875b: III, 137), are therefore represented as qualities related to physical and spiritual manliness.

Similarly, his ability to subdue 'rebellious subjects' – his limbs, his horse, or the rioting fisher-folk in *The Marquis of Lossie* - is described as natural in one born to a high social position. Malcolm's body therefore becomes both the justification and articulation of his position of command, leaving his noble birth to appear as an additional convenience, rather than his vehicle to power.

Through his belief in patriarchal authority, through the power of his body, and through his noble birth, Malcolm regulates social tensions within his community. When the Marquis hits him, Malcolm passively accepts the blow, saying 'I hed no richt to lowse my temper an' be impident' (MacDonald, 1875b: II, 207). It is an implicit justification of his own authority (in his position as Marquis) over individuals who endanger the social order. Just as he physically restrains the mare Kelpie, so does he control the actions of his wayward sister Florimel by invoking his authority, first as an elder (legitimate) brother, and second as the heretofore unknown head of her clan. In doing so, he protects his 'women' from the consequences of their rebellious actions – in Kelpie's case, death for unmanageability; in his sister's case, marriage to a seducer. Moreover, Malcolm is defended from a charge of tyranny by the narrator's assertion that 'there is no life more filled with a sense of oppression and lack of freedom than that of those under no external control, in whom Duty has not yet gathered sufficient strength to assume the reins of government and subject them to the highest law' (MacDonald, 1875b: II, 151). Under this principle, Malcolm's erstwhile occupation of fisherman becomes significant. While in literal terms a manual occupation that situates him within the working-classes of his community, in his vision of Armageddon the fisherman becomes instead a figure of command, fighting a spiritual war against doubt and dissent that is upheld by the 'fish' who give him power. As a result, the occupation of fisherman becomes the metaphorical equivalent of the soldier, the teacher, the minister and the leader, all of which are eventually sublimated into his role as patriarch and defender over the men and women who comprise his social collective.

The portrayal of the androgynous male body therefore contains implicit implications for his social and spiritual characterisation, creating parallels with a natural order (and a spiritualised antagonism to materiality) that presents obedience to the social hierarchy as a divine pre-requisite. As such, while appearing in contrast to MacDonald's more manly characters (such

as Malcolm), the androgyne performs a similar pacifying function. However, his role in society finds conflict with contemporary depictions of muscular manliness, with the result that his material actions are portrayed as ineffective, drawing attention to the unsuitability of ideological or spiritual labour within a society founded upon material or economic concerns. Victimised by their inability to influence or comprehend the material world, MacDonald's androgynous characters assume the status of passive sufferers, their bodies metaphorically obfuscated from the narrative in a powerful comment on their social capability. Within the next chapter, I shall expand on this antagonism between spirituality and material form in the image of the female body, drawing attention to its illusive nature within a narrative tradition predicated on establishing the man as the instigator of social action, and the woman as the idealised angel of his domestic sanctuary.

Chapter 6: Unmuscular Christianity – Obfuscating Femininity

In the previous chapter, I explored the effeminate characterisation of the manly body (whether in the case of spiritual androgyny or dandyism), which marks it as divergent from idealised manliness, indicating a tendency for either immorality (as in the case of the dandy) or social inefficacy. Diamond's attempts at philanthropic intervention are thereby shown to be counter-productive, unaware as he is of the brutal materialism of his culture. Meanwhile, when Gilbert Galbraith and Clare Skymer begin to interact successfully with their societies – promoting reform, gaining status, defending other 'victims' – they lose their androgynous characteristics and become strong men within new areas of social responsibility. As such, social inefficacy appears associated with the expression of feminine characteristics within MacDonald's novels, and this in turn has significant implications for the role of women within his world-view, and for the role of men in relation to women.

Ginger Stelle claims that 'George MacDonald's active role in women's emancipation is well known' since 'Most of his heroines challenge Victorian norms for women' (Stelle, 2005: 51), and Roderick McGillis likewise writes that MacDonald 'encourages us to reconsider our attitudes to sex roles and sexual stereotyping' (McGillis, 1992: 10). However, I argue that MacDonald's stance on this matter is less obvious. The 'Victorian norms for women' span numerous discourses, and not all Victorian 'feminists' (as we would use the term today) supported every aspect women's emancipation. Indeed, Octavia Hill spoke out against universal suffrage (Darley, 2010: 78; Raeper, 1988: 261), despite her more radical views on the rights of women in terms of education and the workplace. Likewise, Barbara Cain notes that both Josephine Butler and Francis Power Cobbe 'tended to emphasize the sexual differences between men and women, basing their demands for the emancipation of women on a particular idea of women's nature' (Caine, 1992: 11). Moreover, one of MacDonald's closest friends (John Ruskin) was profoundly rigid in his assignment of idealised gender identities, and his influence on MacDonald's vision (both in the context of urbanisation and gender assignment) should not be disregarded.

In *Sesame and Lilies*, John Ruskin describes gender roles in terms of social interaction, stating that 'The man's power is active, progressive, defensive.' He goes on to say:

He is eminently the doer, the creator, the discoverer, the defender. His intellect is for speculation and invention; his energy for adventure, for war, and for conquest, wherever war is just, wherever conquest necessary. But the woman's power is for rule, not for battle,—and her intellect is not for invention or creation, but for sweet ordering, arrangement, and decision. She sees the qualities of things, their claims, and their places. Her great function is Praise; she enters into no contest, but infallibly adjudges the crown of contest. By her office, and place, she is protected from all danger and temptation' (Ruskin, 1871: 91).

In the above passage, Ruskin argues that the power balance between men and women is equal, even if focused in different areas. However, his arguments intrinsically separate women from material interaction, and thereby reduce their ability to directly influence the world around them. The man is 'the doer, the creator, the discoverer, the defender', while the woman's role is based on her 'infallible' ability to allocate praise in contests between men. Eve Sedgwick likewise notes that powerful (manly) characters are by their nature 'mobile, encompassing, universal' while other (effeminate or feminine) characters are 'fixed, static, limited' (Sedgwick, 1993: 80). The role of power in the assignment of gender therefore separates gender from the literal sex of a character; male characters that lack power (being somehow separated from social action) are therefore effeminate, while female characters possessing power may be considered imbued with unnatural activity or manly characteristics. Given the number of apparently powerful feminine characters within MacDonald's narratives, it would therefore be natural to see MacDonald as a writer attempting to frustrate the patriarchal power-dynamic between men and women – to describe him, as McGillis does, as a 'subversive writer' (McGillis, 2003: 89). However, close analysis of characters such as North Wind (*At the Back of the North Wind*, 1871), the Wise Woman (*The Wise Woman,* 1875) and Great-Great-Grandmother Irene (*The Princess and the Goblin*, 1871; *The Princess and Curdie*, 1882) reveals that their power is an illusion, disguising their intangibility and inefficacy outside the environment of the home. Indeed, where MacDonald writes actual physical or social power in a female body, we see represented another form of 'unworkable' androgyny – the masculine woman, or the unnatural monster. Unlike MacDonald's male androgynous characters, the consequence of their liminal identity is not a passive and inevitable death. Instead, we see mechanisms of control, undertaken by MacDonald's heroic,

'manly' characters, against the unnaturally powerful female body. As such, MacDonald's apparent attempts to 'queer' the female gender identity are instead revealed to be a reinforcement of the status quo, restraining the 'queer' in order to promote a rigid expression of the feminine ideal.

Within this chapter, I draw inspiration from Mary Poovey, Patricia Johnson and Laurence Taliarach-Vielmas to investigate the female body as an absence – an intangible form that reflects the social incorporeality necessary to her representation as a 'true woman' (Poovey, 1989; Johnson, 2001; Taliarach-Vielmas, 2007). The mechanisms by which the feminine body is rendered intangible may be literal (as in the case of North Wind or The Light Princess ('The Light Princess', 1864) or oblique, disguised by the mutability of body and spirit that allows affective disorders to be represented through the body, while bodily disorders are represented through the emotions. These mechanisms in turn render the feminine body dependent upon third parties and proxies for physical interaction, yet unlike their male counterparts, this state of dependency is upheld as an articulation of spirituality rather than inefficacy, while simultaneously articulating the innate vulnerability of the ideal feminine to the corrupting influences of a non-idealised world. The removal of power from the feminine ideal therefore renders her dependent upon the expression of ideal manliness, for whom the defence of the feminine becomes a social duty. This in turn allows MacDonald to redirect discourses on the power dynamic between men and women, through other discourses on victimisation relevant to the mid-Victorian era. In particular, we see MacDonald's engagement with animal rights discourses as a re-framing of discourses on domestic violence and sexual exploitation – an association that was passionately made by Frances Power Cobbe in her anti-vivisection campaigns of the 1870s. Each of these arguments, within MacDonald's narratives, leads us back to the inherent *rightness* of feminine obfuscation, with the result that the woman's material cares and concerns – social, political or individual – vanish, like her body, from the narrative space. In the 1882 novel *Donal Grant*, we see perhaps the clearest articulation of this process. Within a narrative that coheres around the concept of female property ownership, we see the female body passed from the hands of her abusers into the hands of a worthy husband, portraying Lady Arctura's body and her property alike as transferable commodities. Moreover, we witness her violent uncle's attempt to wrest property from her control via imprisonment and enforced marriage – scenes that are characterised by images of animal cruelty (in the form of whips and spurs), and by images of graphic (if

metaphorical) rape. Nevertheless, within the narrative structure of *Donal Grant*, Arctura's suffering is of secondary importance, her bodily concerns relegated to the realm of symbolism and narrative device to ensure the transmission of her property along the morally reputable male line. Her material possessions – her body, her property, and finally her life – are stripped away, allowing her to remain as an idealised symbol of spiritualised, if dead, femininity. In this way, narratives of feminine development differ markedly from narratives of manly development; far from being a search for selfhood and the appropriate adoption of social power, we instead witness the strategies by which women become commodities in transactions of male power, and in the development of manly identity.

Obfuscation through Idealisation

The relationship between men and women – whether as social contemporaries or within the domestic hierarchy – was a point of intense negotiation throughout MacDonald's lifetime. Tosh argues that 'once home was recognised as the prime site of 'the religion of the heart', the spiritual standing of the wife was bound to rise (Tosh, 1995: 73). In 'The Broken Swords' the protagonist's defence of a young woman from rape might appear to us as a hollow victory, since his actions facilitate her suicide rather than saving her life. However, his ability to leave her body an 'undesecrated temple' overwrites the narrative of an individual woman with that of a spiritually-defined archetype, maintaining the purity of the ideal even while the individual is allowed to die. Similarly, in the 1855 narrative poem *Within & Without* (MacDonald's first literary success), MacDonald's willingness to equate rape with a consensual (if extra-marital) affair demonstrates that the prime concern is not the woman herself, but rather the ideal that she represents. When the obsessive Count Nembroni attacks the heroine Lilia, her protector Julian kills him 'as I would a dog that bit you' (MacDonald, 1855: 50). However, when Julian later believes (albeit incorrectly) that she has abandoned him for another man, he asks 'Why did I kill Nembroni? I have saved from outrage, but have not saved from ill' (MacDonald, 1855: 140).

Like many of his contemporaries, MacDonald held that the archetype of womanhood (and the domestic ideology she represented) stood at the heart of the national morality. In the 1886 *What's Mine's Mine*, MacDonald's argument that a man must be his sister's keeper for the

sake of national growth echoes the earlier comments of John Ruskin (MacDonald, 1886: II, 56). In *Sesame and Lilies*, Ruskin writes:

> man's work for his own home is [...] to secure its maintenance, progress, and defence; the woman's to secure its order, comfort, and loveliness. Expand both these functions. The man's duty as a member of a commonwealth, is to assist in the maintenance, in the advance, in the defence of the state. The woman's duty, as a member of the commonwealth, is to assist in the ordering, in the comforting, and in the beautiful adornment of the state (Ruskin, 1871: 110).

This placement of gender – and specifically domesticity – at the heart of the national health demonstrates the perceived importance of maintaining the boundary between manliness and femininity, with Ruskin proceeding to warn of the inevitable consequences of a failure in the feminine ideal. He declares, 'you are too often idle and careless queens, grasping at majesty in the least things, while you abdicate it in the greatest' (Ruskin, 1871: 114). He continues, 'Men, by their nature, are prone to fight; they will fight for any cause, or for none. It is for you to choose their cause for them, and to forbid them when there is no cause. There is no suffering, no injustice, no misery, in the earth, but the guilt of it lies with you' (Ruskin, 1871: 115). While MacDonald's arguments are rarely as forceful as those of his friend, his narratives nevertheless uphold an assumption that failures in the national health are founded upon the breakdown of gender ideals, with a consequent failure of the domestic structure. As a result, in his narratives we see a divided reaction to women as at once a source of national salvation, and a source of national danger.

The years of MacDonald's literary career were some of the most violent in terms of gender-based legislation and social reform, giving rise to periods of intense uncertainty as the traditional role of the domestic angel came under threat. William Raeper notes that such fears even preyed on the minds of individuals traditionally considered to be campaigners for female equality (Raeper, 1988: 261). Despite regular arguments with Frederick Denison Maurice on the subject of feminine independence, Octavia Hill resisted the concept of universal suffrage out of fear that it would precipitate a reduction in her workforce of philanthropic ladies (Darley, 2010: 78; Raeper, 1988: 261). Similarly, within MacDonald's

narratives we see a chronological shift in the nature of the threat against womanhood and domesticity, his representations of gender aligning themselves with national social and political themes. In the years prior to and during the Contagious Diseases Acts of 1862, 1866 and 1869 the threat to domestic security is frequently sexual in nature, polarising the female body between an immobile and virginal ideal, and a predatory, socially destructive sexuality.[160] Even through this period we see contextual change, with early representations of prostitution in *Phantastes* shifting from a martial to an urban environment in the later *Alec Forbes of Howglen* and *Robert Falconer.*[161] At the same time, we see the introduction of new domestic threats and defences, mirroring debates on education, employment, marital rights and secularisation.

It is almost a cliché to discuss contrasts in the activity and passivity of male and female bodies, yet the persistent association of manliness with musculature renders it particularly apt for MacDonald's narratives. The physical grounding of the manly subject (as indicated through a muscular build together with his ability to influence social events) renders the unmuscular male both effeminate and ineffectual – an outmoded (if holy) ideal of masculinity that must either die, or be reborn into a more physically robust archetype.[162] In this way, Sir Gibbie and Clare Skymer negotiate the transition from holy child to ideal Man, moving from the status of victim to defender while guarding against the encroachment of destructive social tendencies. In contrast, the bodies of the Christ-like Diamond and Eric Ericson fail to develop in tandem with their desire to effect change, remaining physically weak while their minds remain idealistic or spiritually conflicted. Their resultant effeminacy (indicated in Diamond's 'girls looks' and Ericson's physical 'daintiness') therefore emphasises a dissociation between the male body and the corporeal world that I argue is echoed by MacDonald's characterisation of 'feminine' women as physically intangible.

Conflating the representation of the spiritualised and the marginalised, the physical bodies of MacDonald's feminine (as opposed to female) characters disappear from the narrative space in a striking comment regarding a woman's place and status in mid-Victorian Britain. Physically and ideologically separated from the worlds of work or interaction, these domestic

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[160] For more on representations sexuality and the Contagious Diseases Acts, see Chapter 7: Urban Environments, Sexuality and Domestic Control.
[161] See Chapter 4: Men in the City – Victims and Reformers.
[162] See Chapter 5: Saintly Androgyny.

'angels' assume educative and regulatory roles towards their less-idealised contemporaries. Indeed, Patricia Ingham notes that the image of the 'womanly woman' was frequently upheld as an aspirational model to the working classes – a vision of middle class domesticity that was 'powerfully present, as a standard for judging by, when inevitably absent from accounts of working-class squalor or promiscuity' (Ingham, 1996: 21).

Demonstrating the reformative influences of domestic ideology, MacDonald's idealised women become the maternal hearts of their respective communities – whether in the form of Miss Clare (the well-born, domesticating heart of a violent tenement) in *The Vicar's Daughter* (1872), or in the form of the smooth-handed fisherman's wife Mrs. Mair (*Malcolm*, 1875) – a gentleman's daughter married well below her status, who is described as 'one of those elect whom Nature sends into the world for the softening and elevation of her other children' (MacDonald, 1875b: I, 24). Mrs. Mair is sharply distinguished from her working contemporaries, being 'still slight and graceful, with a clear complexion, and the prettiest teeth possible', which physical attributes she owes to the fact that 'her husband's prudence had rendered hard work less imperative' (MacDonald, 1875b: I, 24). Moreover, Mr. Mair's 'singular care over her good looks' results in the recruitment of his 'rough, honest, elder sister' to handle his wife's portion of the physical labour, it being 'no kindness to keep [her] from the hardest work, seeing it was only through such that she could have found a sufficiently healthy interest in life' (MacDonald, 1875b: I, 24). Mrs. Mair's idealised nature – her softness, her beauty, her gracefulness – is therefore made possible by isolating her from the realities of life in a working-class environment; she is well-born, her husband is (comparatively) well-off, she does not need to work, and her husband's sister sustains her own 'interest in living' by taking the part of a household servant / labourer.

Mrs. Mair demonstrates the conflicted image of the working woman in MacDonald's fiction. In her, we see an idealised woman who both is, and is not, a member of the working class, while her less-idealised sister-in-law handles the labour that would otherwise be a necessary aspect of her existence. The implication that non-domestic work detracts from the feminine nature is further emphasised by the social disgrace that afflicts so many of his working female characters – including the callous Nanny in *At the Back of the North Wind* (1871) and the unmarried mother Catherine Weir in *Annals of a Quiet Neighbourhood* (1867). Even the

shop-keeper's daughter Mary Marston (*Mary Marston,* 1881) proves her idealised nature by surrendering her independence to pursue unpaid employment as a maid. In doing so, she enacts the role of maternal guardian to her employer Mrs. Redmain while at the same time overseeing the management and maintenance of a household. Her reward is marriage to the upper-middle class Godfrey Wardour, and her own relocation into a class more appropriate to her social philosophy than her birth.

MacDonald's descriptions of Mary's social philosophy are upheld by his blurred characterisation of body and nature; like Mrs. Mair in *Malcolm,* Mary's idealised and domesticating nature is articulated through a physical description that nevertheless serves to separate her from her material environment. This is confirmed by the narrator's hesitation in describing her: 'I cannot give a portrait of her; I can but cast her shadow on my page' (MacDonald, 1881: 7). MacDonald goes on to describe her 'shadow' as a 'dainty half-length, neither short nor tall', rising 'calm and motionless' above the shop-counter (MacDonald, 1881: 7). His reluctance to describe her body is plain. Even when he offers a Petrarch-like itemisation of her features, he does so in a way that is more of a moral characterisation than a physical description. The shape of her lips expresses 'firmness of modesty'; her chin (being 'perhaps a little too sharply defined for her years') conveys conviction (MacDonald, 1881: 7). Her hair and dress are notable for a lack of the fashionable extravagance that MacDonald describes as common to 'shop-women, who in general choose for imitation and exorbitant development whatever is ugliest and least ladylike in the fashion of the hour' (MacDonald, 1881: 7). Her boots are notable for being 'unseen of any', yet it is her hands – the symbols of activity and material contact – that act as 'seals to her natural patent of ladyhood' (MacDonald, 1881: 7; 8).

For Mary Marston in 1881, as for the protagonist of 'The Broken Swords' in 1854, hands act to denote a class status that is more of a philosophical than physical reality.[163] The protagonist of 'The Broken Swords' is aristocratic despite employment in a factory, while Mary is a 'lady' despite her shop-work. However, the contemporary reaction to these hands is strikingly different. In 'The Broken Swords', the protagonist's 'whiteness of hand' casts doubt on his capabilities as either worker or soldier. This association is echoed in *Mary*

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[163] See page 18.

Marston when the subject is a man rather than a woman: 'it is a more manly [...] thing, to follow a good handcraft, if it make the hands black as a coal, than to spend the day in keeping books, and making up accounts, though therein the hands should remain white' (MacDonald, 1881: 348). While Mary's hands might signify ladyhood, in descriptions of masculinity the hand becomes a symbol of labour, with the possession of white hands evolving from an assertion of aristocracy into an expression of indolence and unmanliness. As such, the hand represents an approximation to the masculine and feminine ideal, yet is predicated on the working status of the man or woman. While Mary *does* work, her hands belie her position, with the result that Mr. Redmain declares Mary's hands to be superior to those of his own well-born wife (MacDonald, 1881: 249).

While it has not been unusual for critics in recent years to approach MacDonald's narratives from a feminist perspective, there have been few attempts to assess what is meant by terming MacDonald a writer of what McGillis calls '"feminine" vision'– a particularly complex question in an era where reform could mean anything from improving women's education in the performance of household duties, to campaigning for universal suffrage (McGillis, 2003: 87). As a result, there is an incredible variety of critical approaches to MacDonald's treatment of femininity, ranging from assertions of liberal attitudes and progressive views to suggestions of misogyny and sexual frustration. Both Tabitha Sparks and William Raeper draw attention to this diversity as an expression of MacDonald's conflicted philosophical position. Sparks in particular describes MacDonald as 'puritanical about women and also accepting of the neo-feminist sexual and social roles' (Sparks, 2009: 48). However, as the following chapters will demonstrate, MacDonald's views on female sexuality remained exceptionally rigid throughout his career, as indeed did his placement of Victorian femininity within the sanctified domestic sphere.

Raeper likewise notes a tension between MacDonald's 'liberalism' and his conservatism, writing that 'Louisa was quite capable of calling MacDonald 'Our Head' or 'Our Master' and he sat at the head of his family like a patriarch. Yet in many ways he was also liberal, even feminist' (Raeper, 1988: 259). Raeper cites MacDonald's friendship with the Leigh-Smiths and Bessie Parkes as evidence of this 'feminism', yet when he first met the girls in Algiers, MacDonald's comments are far from 'liberal'. Instead, he criticises their 'fast' natures,

confining his approval to their skill in drawing and painting (MacDonald, 2005: 270).
Likewise, MacDonald's close friendship with Octavia Hill and Josephine Butler is often
taken as an indication of his 'feminism', yet neither woman argued for universal suffrage, and
Raeper notes that MacDonald's 'association with Octavia Hill may even have prejudiced him
against the question' (Raeper, 1988: 261). Even Josephine Butler – despite the controversy
provoked by her willingness to discuss the matter of prostitution in public – has been
described as an exceptionally conservative campaigner, founding her so-called 'feminism' on
'the importance of motherhood and the sanctity of women's domestic role' (Caine, 1992: 50).
Her outspoken criticism of the Contagious Diseases Acts was therefore premised on the
divine nature of womanhood rather than any assertion of equality, thereby upholding the role
of the woman within the sanctified domestic environment (Liggins, 2003: 40). As such,
MacDonald's friendship with these female campaigners should not be taken as an indication
of 'feminism', even if such a concept could be easily defined in relation to mid-Victorian
politics.

The appearance of powerful women in MacDonald's narratives is another source of claims
that MacDonald was possessed of feminist and revolutionary tendencies. While Neuhouser
acknowledges the 'limitations which crept into MacDonald's thinking on the subject of
women', he yet points to the spiritual standing of characters such as the Wise Woman (*The
Wise Woman,* 1874) and great-great-grandmother Irene (*The Princess and the Goblin,* 1872;
The Princess and Curdie, 1883) as evidence of MacDonald's progressive views (Neuhouser,
2007: 10). However, Judith Gero John notes that such characters 'cannot quite escape their
Victorian heritage' (Gero John, 1991: 27). Indeed, their 'power' is often ambiguously
defined, being based on religious and domestic ideals that emphasise their lack of contact
with the material word.

In 'The Golden Key', the magical grandmother is primarily a domestic figure. Her role is to
nurture and protect the children (Mossy and Tangle), even as she instructs them to complete
their developmental journeys as dictated by their gender (Gero John, 1991: 29). Her position
in the narrative is similar to that of the old woman in *Phantastes*, who nurtures Anodos
following his disastrous awakening of the Marble Lady. Like the grandmother in 'The
Golden Key', she is not seen outside the home, and appears unable to leave – even when

Anodos unleashes a flood that submerges her within her home. Great-great-grandmother Irene and North Wind are also described as powerful 'matriarchs', yet lack permanent physical presence, being dependent on others for their existence. Great-great-grandmother Irene is essentially trapped within her home, only able to communicate with the outside world through proxies (such as her doves) or when others are lured to her chambers (Gero John, 1991: 29). Meanwhile, North Wind's body grows and diminishes according to the season and her location, even ceasing to be a body as she is transformed into a doorway between worlds.[164] Finally, despite her willingness to assert moral authority over a king and queen, the Wise Woman is likewise at heart a maternal ideal, able to remove girls from a poor educational or domestic environment in order to teach them appropriate (feminine) behaviours and beliefs through domestic labour (MacDonald, 1875a).

The consideration of a topic as broad and loosely-defined as 'feminine vision' is therefore of limited use when reading MacDonald in the light of his social context, and it is necessary to separate out the different themes involved in contemporary debates on the nature of womanhood. Questions such as suffrage, education, marital rights, property ownership, sexuality and employment were treated with vastly different attitudes even within MacDonald's social network, nor were MacDonald's own declarations unambiguous. While McGillis argues that 'MacDonald's interest in what the Victorians referred to as the "Woman Question" is clear', there is marked conflict between his sympathies with educational reform, and his apparent discomfort with the concept of female employment (McGillis, 2003: 87).

When MacDonald wrote to Josiah Gilbert Holland in 1871 he declared himself 'gratified' by the other novelist's views on 'the woman question' – especially coming from '*fast* America' (Sadler, 1994: 176). His declaration of solidarity with Holland is incompatible with his popular characterisation as a campaigner for female equality, especially in politics or the workplace. Holland's biographer Harriette Plunkett describes his approach to 'the woman question' as laid out in the novel *Miss Gilbert's Career* (1860), noting his view that 'woman's highest happiness is found at the fireside, and her truest work in the home' (Plunkett, 1894: 48). Like MacDonald, Holland expanded his view of domestic life to a

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[164] Indeed, North Wind's transformation into a doorway could be seen as symbolic of her maternal nature, her body subsumed in the maternal role when it disappears in order to provide passage between the worlds of birth and death.

national scale, stating that 'No nation can be destroyed while it possesses a good home-life. My lawn cannot be spoiled so long as the grass is green, no matter how many trees may be prostrated, no matter how many flowers may be trampled under feet by unclean beasts' (Plunkett, 1894: 49). He concludes, 'the life of a nation is not in political institutions, and not in political parties, and not in politicians or great men, but in the love-inspired home-life of the people' (Plunkett, 1894: 49). His comments are not dissimilar to those of John Ruskin in *Sesame and Lilies* (1865), whose acknowledgement of the blurred work/home divide does not preclude his segregation of masculine and feminine duty into the maintenance of 'King's Treasuries' and 'Queen's Gardens'. He defends this segregation on the grounds that:

> 'The man, in his rough work in open world, must encounter all peril and trial;—to him, therefore, must be the failure, the offence, the inevitable error: often he must be wounded, or subdued; often misled; and ALWAYS hardened. But he guards the woman from all this; within his house, as ruled by her, unless she herself has sought it, need enter no danger, no temptation, no cause of error or offence. This is the true nature of home—it is the place of Peace; the shelter, not only from all injury, but from all terror, doubt, and division' (Ruskin, 1871: 91).

These are familiar themes for MacDonald readers, noting once again the centrality of the domestic life as a force against national and international disturbance, and the woman's place as spiritual guardian over the domestic sphere. However, Ruskin's insistence that the woman is kept separate from material influence simultaneously allows him to assert her culpability in any failure of the domestic sanctuary – danger and temptation entering 'because she herself has sought it' (Ruskin, 1871: 91). Building on this, the intangibility and passivity of the female body is scarcely an unfamiliar trope in Victorian narrative, isolating the woman from the influences that a true man would protect her from – yet the extremity to which MacDonald pursues this image is disturbing.

McGillis acknowledges the familiar physical archetypes of manliness and femininity in MacDonald's narratives, describing male characters as 'associated with such things as daylight, work, rationality, physicality, travel, and leadership' while his female characters are more closely associated with 'moonlight, contemplation, imagination, spirituality,

domesticity, and passivity' (McGillis, 2003: 93). The stereotypes are most clearly observable in *The History of Photogen and Nycteris* (1882), where the witch Watho confines two pregnant women (Aurora and Vesper) within vastly different environments. Housed in a tower room filled with sunshine amidst entertainments that 'precluded all dullness', Aurora gives birth to the boy Photogen (MacDonald, 1882: I, 90). However, Watho deceives her into believing that the child died at birth. Aurora leaves the castle, unknowingly abandoning her son to the care of the unmaternal witch. In contrast, the blind Vesper is imprisoned in a barely-lit cavern filled with 'couches, covered with richest silk, and soft as her own cheek, for her to lie upon; and the carpets were so thick, she might have cast herself down anywhere - as befitted a tomb' (MacDonald, 1882: I, 93). Isolated from the outside world and kept 'ever in an atmosphere of sweet sorrow', Vesper gives birth to the girl Nycteris and dies. Caring 'for nothing in itself – only for knowing it', Watho proceeds to subvert the maternal role by raising the two children as part of a social experiment (MacDonald, 1882: I, 87).

The History of Photogen and Nycteris provides a fascinating insight into MacDonald's position on the nature / nurture debate. Photogen is taught to hunt and to excel in physical activities, but only in the sunlight; he is never allowed to experience darkness, and is trained to fear the night. In contrast, Nycteris is kept indoors, her only light coming from a dim, alabaster lamp. Initially, the story appears to uphold McGillis's assertion that MacDonald uses gender stereotypes ironically, in an attempt to confound the normal patriarchal binaries (McGillis, 2003: 98). Photogen is allowed into the outside world while Nycteris is kept within her home, yet both are described as unnatural situations that inhibit their ability to live a full life. However, the presence of the lamp in Nycteris's cavern frustrates this reading. While Vesper appears as a parody of the feminine ideal, her blindness isolates her from both physical and metaphorical 'light', leaving her to succumb (like Adela Cathcart) to monotony and depression in the absence of faith. In contrast, Nycteris was born under the light of the lamp. As with Duncan (the blind piper in *Malcolm*), the lamp assumes a spiritual significance that allows Nycteris to love the light and to function in its presence, despite the physical pain it causes her.[165] For this reason, she is presented as more capable than Photogen, who is incapacitated by fear in the presence of darkness. Within the confines of her cave, Nycteris is able to develop a faith that Photogen (in his liberty) lacks, and as a result the pair are able to escape.

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[165] See Chapter 2: Class and Employment – Manliness in the Workplace.

Far from confounding the patriarchal binaries, *The History of Photogen and Nycteris* is 'a day and night märchen' that describes the way in which the different characteristics of day and night – and men and women – render them inter-dependent. This is later upheld in *Malcolm* when the narrator expresses 'scorn of the evil fancy that the distinction between them [men and women] is solely or even primarily physical' (MacDonald, 1875b: I, 175). Implicitly, *The History of Photogen and Nycteris* upholds the doctrine of the separate spheres and gender-defined natures, with the woman gaining the ability to be the spiritual guardian through her imprisonment within the home.

In MacDonald's realist and gothic narratives, the division between men and women is both more apparent, and more disturbing. The proposed whipping of Juliet Faber in *Paul Faber, Surgeon* (1879) and the lethal imprisonment of the earl's lover in *Donal Grant* (1883) demonstrate the ways in which the unfeminine body is punished for its failure to conform to the ideal of the domestic angel, culminating in the imprisonment and dismemberment of Lilith at the hands of her ex-husband in the *fin de siècle* fantasy novel *Lilith* (1895). At the same time, MacDonald's perpetuation of the gender-based rhetoric surrounding debates on animal abuse and vivisection confirm the female body as one that is either defenceless (and to be protected) or dangerous (and to be controlled).[166] Whether asleep, intangible, unconscious, forcibly restrained or dead, the feminine body is rendered implicitly passive, countering the socially- (and domestically-) destructive effects of unnatural activity seen in the unfeminine (often polluting or contagious) female body.

In *Paul Faber, Surgeon,* MacDonald characterises Juliet's performance of her domestic roles by saying that 'without religion, she could never be, in any worthy sense, a woman at all.' (MacDonald, 1879b: III, 12). Anticipating the reader's incredulity at this statement, he argues that those who disagree 'simply do not know what religion means, and think I do not know what a woman means' (MacDonald, 1879b: III, 12). In this passage, MacDonald asserts that religion is an essential attribute of femininity, to the extent that without religion, a female's very existence as Woman is negated. Later in the paragraph, he uses this statement to explain not only Juliet's pre-marital seduction (and implicitly her failed marriage), but also her 'far-

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[166] See Chapter 7: Urban Environments, Sexuality and Domestic Control.

gone childish quarrels with her silly mother, and the neglect and disobedience she had too often been guilty of toward her father' (MacDonald, 1879b: III, 12). Lacking religion, the younger Juliet exists in a state of domestic rebellion, unwilling (or unable) to adequately fulfil her domestic roles as daughter and (later) wife. When her marriage to Paul Faber breaks down under the weight of her past sexual experience, the pregnant Juliet fakes her own death in a fit of hysteria. Having already failed in her roles as daughter and wife, she appears destined to also become a single mother – a fate prevented by her reconciliation with her husband (together with her God) on the birth of their son.

The relationship between religion, femininity and domesticity is, of course, a common one within Victorian narrative. Patricia Ingham notes that 'the ideal middle class home was (if women came up to scratch) a haven as well as a heaven, managed by an efficient angel whose education had combined a strict formation on Christian principles with a rigorous training in domestic skills' (Ingham, 1996: 22). While the previous chapters focused on MacDonald's espousal of paternalism as a social system that implicitly upholds the social hierarchy, in his narratives the spiritual role of the Mother is as defended and codified as the role of the Father – both of whom are necessary for the successful establishment of a stable domestic (and national) environment, and both of whom require different spiritual and physical characteristics for the correct fulfilment of their allotted social role.

In *The Miracles of Our Lord* (1870), MacDonald notes that the quality of filial love differs between men and women 'as the woman differs from the man', and he rejoices in the apparently feminine qualities of 'undefendedness and self-accountable modesty' that allow mothers to be 'the salvation of their children!' (MacDonald, 1870: 131; 138). However, unlike manliness (which in MacDonald's narratives is usually an attribute learned within a literal or metaphorical domestic environment), femininity is an *a priori* construct that is only lost through the rejection of its principles. Likewise, the domestic roles of daughter, wife and mother are integral rather than learned, with the wifely and maternal nature separable from the actual status of wife and mother.

Ruskin echoes this principle, arguing that 'wherever a true wife comes, this home is always round her' (Ruskin, 1871: 92). He continues, 'for a noble woman it stretches far round her,

better than ceiled with cedar, or painted with vermilion, shedding its quiet light far, for those who else were homeless' (Ruskin, 1871: 92). A woman's femininity therefore lay in her innate ability to create a 'home', regardless of familial connections. Even as a child, the idealised Annie Anderson expresses maternal and wifely qualities towards Alec Forbes, later opening 'the heart almost of motherhood, to receive and shelter the worn, outraged man' (MacDonald, 1865b: III, 142). In contrast, we are told that Alec's biological mother lacks the 'indescribable aroma of motherhood' – something that MacDonald later refers to as a 'heavenly health' – that would serve to make her a 'divine-woman' (MacDonald, 1865b: III, 32). Mrs. Forbes's failure lies in her inability to be a 'mother' to any but her own biological children, as is demonstrated by her willingness to overlook the needs of the vulnerable Annie whenever Alec returns home.

The *a priori* nature of femininity (and domesticity) is an important point to emphasise when considering narratives of female reform in the latter half of the nineteenth century, since many reformatories held that performance of domestic duties had the ability to re-awaken a feminine nature that had been repressed (Barton, 2011: 89). Indeed, a woman's domestic capability was held to have significant implications for national security, since her more emotive characteristics were believed to soften the more primal, combative characteristics of her husband, allowing him to become a 'morally excellent man' who is 'well suited to the duty of restraining the irrational and dangerous working classes' (Ingham, 1996: 22). Women lacking the appropriate maternal or protective qualities ascribed to femininity thereby risked perpetuating in their sons and husbands the same unregulated male behaviours expressed by the rebelling soldiers in 'The Broken Swords'. Ruskin in particular argued that for the domestic environment to function as the spiritual sanctuary needed in an increasingly industrial world, women must be 'incapable of error' (Ruskin, 1871: 93).

Confirming this, throughout MacDonald's narratives we are presented with scenes of domestic discord in which the departure of a woman from her idealised nature inhibits the moral development of her partner. In *Malcolm* (1875), the Marquis is initially saved by the love of Malcolm's mother Griselda Campbell. While at first we are led to believe that Malcolm is the illegitimate son of the Marquis, Griselda Campbell's idealised nature disrupts this reading, since her influence rendered the Marquis 'incapable of playing her false'

(MacDonald, 1875b: III, 260). Instead, he persuades her to 'the unequal yoking of honesty and secrecy' (MacDonald, 1875b: III, 260), providing a comment on the vast difference in their social and moral positions that is reflected in their secret marriage according to Scottish (though not English) law. However, believing Griselda to have died in childbirth, we are told that the Marquis 'rushed into dissipation', destroying the 'tender buds of a new life that had begun to mottle the withering tree of his nature' (MacDonald, 1875b: III, 261). In this condition, he marries Florimel's mother – unknowingly committing bigamy with a woman who has 'bartered herself for a lofty alliance' (MacDonald, 1875b: III, 262). Unlike Griselda, Florimel's mother is insufficient to the task of spiritually reforming her husband. While for a time he attempts to 'conduct himself in some measure like a gentleman', his new wife grows disappointed with her failure, eventually alienating her husband and dying 'of a sorrow almost too selfish to afford even a suggestion of purifying efficacy' (MacDonald, 1875b: III, 262).

Left alone in his dissolute state, the Marquis raises Florimel according to his own nature, supplanting the domestic femininity that should have come from her mother with his own superficial and contrary temperament. When Florimel decides to accept the proposal of a known seducer over the man she loves in *The Marquis of Lossie*, her choice is a reflection of the choices made by her mother and father, prioritising social position over the moral reputation of her suitor. Moreover, it is a choice that threatens to allow the corrupt Lord Liftore (previously Miekelham) – who has already refused to acknowledge his illegitimate child, and whose tyrannical nature has previously been alluded to by his desire to whip the elderly Duncan MacPhail for retaliating against a malicious prank – control over both her own legal and spiritual life.

In *Malcolm*, the question of marriage across class boundaries is rendered unimportant, so long as the woman exhibits the traits of domestic femininity. The 'unequal yoking' of the Marquis to Griselda Campbell is in this instance ironic, since their inequality of class is offset by Griselda's reformative capabilities, while the equality of class fails to offset the destructive relationship between the Marquis and Florimel's mother. As such, the concept of appropriate marriage is founded upon the correct performance of gender ideals, with the establishment of the domestic sanctuary through an idealised femininity resulting in the moral

reform of the man into a worthy patriarch. Where this fails to occur, we witness the breakdown of moral values and the domestic identity, fostering the perpetuation of destructive social tendencies across the generational boundary. Therefore, in instances where the domestic environment is threatened – whether through inappropriate marriage, an unstable father or a non-domestic mother – it becomes the role of the manly man to intercede. In narratives from *Adela Cathcart* to *Donal Grant,* the timely intervention of MacDonald's protagonists therefore mitigates the effects of a 'broken' home-life, and allows for the re-establishment of a viable domestic hierarchy.

Discussing the role of the female body in Victorian narrative, Helena Michie and Laurence Taliarach-Vielmas argue that 'descriptions of the female body reflect contemporary ideology: female bodies appear only to disappear, female flesh vanishes behind tropes and figures that contain improper corporeality' (Taliarach-Vielmas, 2007: 39). Ruskin confirms this point, arguing that 'The best women are [...] the most difficult to know; they are recognized chiefly in the happiness of their husbands and the nobleness of their children; they are only to be divined, not discerned, by the stranger; and, sometimes, seem almost helpless except in their homes' (Ruskin, 1871: xxvi). In *Donal Grant,* when the housemaid Eppy Comin enters into an affair with the deceitful and temperamental (and illegitimate) Lord Forgue, her body becomes a clear indication of a unfeminine nature together with a sexual history – its material presence (exacerbated by pregnancy) underscoring the materialism of her nature. Indeed, Eppy's character – like her body – intrudes upon the narrative, being described as rebellious and assertive, as willing to speak 'evil o' dignities' as she is to steal money from her impoverished grandfather (MacDonald, 1883: I, 64). In contrast, MacDonald's feminine characters are obfuscated in terms of both physical description and social interaction, defined in terms that serve to separate them from the polluting influences of the material world.

Obfuscating the Feminine Body

Inverting Mary Poovey's preposition that medical men in the Victorian era formulated diagnoses and cures for female behaviours that went contrary to social expectations (Poovey, 1989: 3), in *Adela Cathcart* (1864) MacDonald clearly obfuscates the feminine body, treating its ailments with spiritual medicines that work to promote his vision of idealised femininity

within the patient. As previously detailed, the plot of *Adela Cathcart* focuses upon a young woman who suffers from an unknown malady, and upon the attempts of her male companions to treat her.[167] When medical intervention fails, Taliarach-Vielmas notes that they 'seek to cure Adela by telling her stories, feeding her words instead of medicines' (Taliarach-Vielmas, 2007: 34). The companions, representing between them the institutions of family, medicine and the church, conclude that her malady is caused by emotional apathy, and is essentially spiritual in origin. They cite poor education as the cause of her illness, and therefore provide literary remedies that teach Adela appropriate feminine behaviours and responses within the bounds of an Anglican faith-system. It provides a fascinating insight into MacDonald's stance on women's education, which appears to borrow heavily from John Ruskin and Frederick Denison Maurice.

John Ruskin's passion for improving the standards of women's education was based upon his desire to 'fit her' for his concept of 'what should be the place, and what the power of woman' (Ruskin, 1871: 93). He goes on to argue that 'A woman, in any rank of life, ought to know whatever her husband is likely to know […] only so far as may enable her to sympathise in her husband's pleasures, and in those of his best friends' (Ruskin, 1871: 100). Laura Green notes that 'Ruskin advocated the kind of separate-but-unequal training that alarmed Davies in many schemes for women's university education' (Green, 2001: 75), yet despite MacDonald's friendship with Barbara Bodichon (née Leigh-Smith) we see like principles articulated within his narratives of feminine development.

While in previous chapters I have argued that Adela's illness is rooted in a disruptive patriarchy, it is the principles of her (religious) education that 'fit her' for the transition from daughter to wife, demonstrating the domestic training at the core of both her education and her 'cure'. The timing of the novel's publication should also be taken into account, coinciding with the opening of the Working Women's College in October 1864 (Darley, 2010: 84). A furtherance of the ambition started by the foundation of the Working Men's College in 1857 at Red Lion Square, London, the Working Women's College grew out of the women's classes that frequently ran alongside those for working men – albeit with a vastly different focus. Gillian Darley notes that these classes (which were not intended for working-class

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[167] See page 78.

women) were designed to 'educate ladies for occupations wherein they could be helpful to the less fortunate members of their own sex' as well as to improve their domestic capabilities (Darley, 2010: 52). Darley describes a prospectus that included male-taught domestic subjects such as '"the Management of Children", "the Management of Houses", care of health and sickness, "the duties we owe to each other" and "what women may do to make their sons good citizens and good men"' (Darley, 2010: 52).

A regular lecturer to the women's classes, MacDonald's views on women's education were scarcely more liberal. As campaigns for equality in universities and medical colleges increased in strength with the qualification of Elizabeth Garrett as the first female doctor in 1865, MacDonald's criticism of modern systems of education grew more apparent. Despite his assertion that women have the right to 'a far wider and more valuable education than they have been in the way of receiving', he maintained a boundary between appropriate education for women and men.[168] MacDonald's willingness to sign a petition to allow medical education for women is taken by Neuhouser as evidence of a change of heart (Neuhouser, 2007: 12), yet Raeper notes that there remained 'a disparity between some of MacDonald's precepts and his practices' (Raeper, 1988: 260). Other than Irene, none of MacDonald's daughters attended a higher institute of learning (Raeper, 1988: 260). Even Irene's education was facilitated by Octavia Hill, who accepted the girl into her drawing class (refusing payment) at the request of Madame Bodichon (MacDonald, 2005: 368). Indeed, MacDonald asserts that much of the 'hardness' of Lady Arctura (*Donal Grant*) and the Palmer sisters (*What's Mine's Mine*) stems from what he calls 'the blindness produced by their conventional training, vulgarly called education' (MacDonald, 1886: I, 158). In the case of the Palmer sisters, he goes further to assert that their education at the hands of a governess had made them 'common' and 'fast', lacking the 'sensitive vitality' to shrink from vulgarity (MacDonald, 1886: I, 41; 40). Meanwhile, he concludes of Arctura that 'She was an honest girl so far as she had been taught--perhaps not so far as she might have been without having been taught' (MacDonald, 1883: I, 155).

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[168]MacDonald's comment that women should naturally recoil from material that is 'not good' echoes his assertion that Annie Anderson would 'instinctively' recoil from unsuitable poetry, even without knowing the reason for its unsuitability (MacDonald, 1865b: I, 207).

MacDonald's arguments for 'natural' education are similar to those embraced by Caroline Southwood Smith (Octavia Hill's mother), whose Pestalozzi-inspired theories suggested that 'observation was the only sure basis for learning and that a child's development should be allowed to follow a natural course' (Darley, 2010: 16). Her argument that 'the care and development of body should be matched by that of the mind' (Darley, 2010: 29) is closely echoed by Ruskin, who yet asserted a distinction between the development of mind and body in men and in women. He argues, 'you may chisel a boy into shape [...] But you cannot hammer a girl into anything. She grows as a flower does' (Ruskin, 1871: 103). To support her 'growth', however, he insists that 'you have first to mould her physical frame, and then, as the strength she gains will permit you, to fill and temper her mind with all knowledge and thoughts which tend to confirm its natural instincts of justice, and refine its natural tact of love' (Ruskin, 1871: 103).

Ruskin's focus on matching education to a woman's apparently a priori talents for 'justice' and 'love' is reminiscent of the affective and religious education provided to MacDonald's heroines. Even where MacDonald permits the formal education of women (rather than girls) in his narratives, it is a domesticating process that culminates in the marriage of woman and tutor as a man capable of assuming (to paraphrase *Thomas Wingfold, Curate*) the 'spiritual direction of her being' (MacDonald, 1876a: I, 62). However, the non-formal educative processes are equally significant. When Harry Armstrong fulfils his medical duty towards Adela in *Adela Cathcart*, he successfully overlays the role of doctor with that of teacher, before sublimating both professions into those of husband and patriarch. Through the stages of this therapy, she gains emotional sensitivity and religious devotion in tandem, reforming the apathetic child into both Christian and devoted wife. This state of marriage becomes at once her treatment and the evidence of her cure, following which her body begins to recover.

The process of curing Adela Cathcart has been the subject of many papers, including Nancy Mellon's 'The Stages of Adela Cathcart's Cure' (1996), F. Hal Broome's 'Dreams, Fairy Tales and the Curing of Adela Cathcart' (1994) and Laurence Taliarach-Vielmas's chapter on *Adela Cathcart* in *Moulding the Female Body in Victorian Fairy Tales and Sensation Novels* (2007). It has become a commonplace to say that the story is overlooked by MacDonald critics, being perceived as a simple vehicle for his short stories. Indeed, William Gray notes

that the difficulty of publishing fairytales in a pre-*Alice in Wonderland* environment led directly to the development of *Adela Cathcart* as a realistic frame for works of fantasy (Gray, 2009: 47). However in recent years the novel has been approached from a wider range of critical perspectives. The essays of F. Hal Broome and Nancy Mellon both employ a psychoanalytical approach, analysing Adela's cure as an early form of 'group therapy' and 'homeopathy' (Broome, 1994; Mellon, 1996). Meanwhile, Taliarach-Vielmas approaches the novel from a feminist perspective that analyses the role of the heroine's body in the development of her cure (Taliarach-Vielmas, 2007).

The contextual importance of Taliarach-Vielmas's interpretation is underscored by Brown, who notes how inter-relating studies of gender and medicine draw attention to the ways in which 'medical knowledge about the body has shaped, informed, and intersected with wider understandings of gender identity, relation, and difference' (Brown, 2010: 592). Taliarach-Vielmas draws a clear parallel between the plots of *Adela Cathcart* and 'The Light Princess' as narratives that advocate spiritual treatments for physical disorders. As the first story to be offered to Adela, 'The Light Princess' sets the direction of the continuing narrative. The story concerns a princess made both spiritually and physically 'light'. As well as being able to float, she is rebellious and uncontrollable, ignores or mocks the commands of her parents, and appears willing to kiss any man, whether he is one of her father's servants or a prince in disguise.

Desperate to cure the princess, her parents consult with a pair of Chinese philosophers from the 'College of Metaphysicians'. The first (a spiritualist) concludes that the princess's soul is incorrectly joined with her body and 'does not by rights belong to this world at all' (MacDonald, 1864a: I, 157). His proposed treatment is to force her soul to belong to the world through a process of compelled education in history and geology. In contrast, the second philosopher (a materialist) concludes that 'the motion of her heart has been reversed', and recommends a system of phlebotomy and ligatures to force her blood to flow the correct way (MacDonald, 1864a: I, 159). The apparently destructive nature of these 'cures' is alluded to by the narrator, who notes the final agreement between the philosophers that the princess should be buried alive for three years, in the hope that the physical pressure of the earth will restore her 'gravity' (MacDonald, 1864a: I, 166). It soon becomes apparent that neither

traditional education nor medical intervention will restore the princess's 'gravity', and it is implied that such attempts will result in her spiritual and / or material death (or 'burial'). Instead, the cure for the princess's physical lightness is found to be immersion in water. When the other characters consider the reflective nature of the princess's spirit and body, she is next made to weep - her feminine decorum restored by the experience of sadness.

The association between emotional responsiveness and feminine maturity is a common trope in mid-Victorian narrative, emphasising the disconnect between idealised womanhood and the material world. Ruskin argues that 'vulgarity lies in want of sensation', going on to assert that while 'innocent vulgarity is merely an untrained and undeveloped bluntness of body and mind [...] in true inbred vulgarity, there is a deathful callousness, which, in extremity, becomes capable of every sort of bestial habit and crime, without fear, without pleasure, without horror, and without pity' (Ruskin, 1871: 36). He concludes that 'fineness and fulness [sic] of sensation' are the qualities which 'the pure woman has above all creatures' (Ruskin, 1871: 37), and MacDonald confirms this by upholding emotional education as the cure for an unfeminine nature. William Grey highlights the association, noting that 'Adela's depression and the princess's levity could be interpreted as "hysterical", in various senses [...] obstacles, even resistances, to growth into full womanhood, including sexual maturity' (Gray, 2009: 52). While I would argue that the emotional states of Adela Cathcart and the Light Princess are closer to apathy than 'depression' or 'levity' (since neither character expresses genuine emotion in her reaction), Grey observes the relationship between female emotional response and maturation.[169]

In much the same way that physical muscularity indicates the development of manliness in MacDonald's narratives, so is emotional responsiveness indicative of femininity. The structure of the 'Christian tragedy' is therefore reconfigured to follow a woman's spiritual 'fall' – expressed as the development of insensitivity – prior to her rescue from a destructive domestic hierarchy.[170] Adela's apathy and disconnection from God (her spiritual 'father') reflects the unreasonable attitudes of her mortal father, just as the brittleness of Lady Arctura (*Donal Grant*) expresses fear of a cruel God in the image of her violent uncle.[171] More

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[169] The light princess always laughs but never smiles.
[170] The 'Christian Tragedy' is outlined in 'The Broken Swords', as described on page 10.
[171] See page 196.

overtly, in *Malcolm* (1875) the argumentative nature of Mrs. Findlay is associated with a breakdown in the authority hierarchy between husband and wife, and this concept is bound up in an expression of unnatural physicality: 'She was, in truth, a woman like another; only being of the crustacean order, she had not yet swallowed her skeleton, as all of us have to do more or less, sooner or later, the idea of that scaffolding being that it should be out of sight' (MacDonald, 1875b: III, 245). This explicit association of emotional 'crabbedness' and lack of femininity is conveyed in a metaphor that directly impacts on the tangibility of the female body, with temperament externalised as an unnatural physical presence – an exoskeleton, that must be swallowed and hidden before the feminine nature can be revived. Her condition gives rise to her nickname of 'the Partan' (meaning 'crab'), which is used at once to express her argumentative nature and the failure of the authority hierarchy within her domestic circle. MacDonald notes that her husband's real name 'was of as little consequence in life as it is in my history', with the result that he comes to share his wife's nickname (MacDonald, 1875b: I, 164). The point is emphasised by the consideration that 'the grey mare being the better horse, the man was thus designated from the crabbedness of his wife' (MacDonald, 1875b: I, 164). Similarly, Mrs. Ramshorn (*Thomas Wingfold, Curate*) exhibits vanity and self-righteousness as a consequence of her weak husband, who (we are told) had 'insufficient weight of character to have the right influence in the formation of his wife's' (MacDonald, 1876a: I, 19). The result is a conflict between her heart – 'which was still womanly' – and her face – which, we assume, is not (MacDonald, 1876a: I, 19).

The state of marriage, representing in microcosm the paternalism of the domestic unit, was therefore upheld as a signifier for the feminine condition, with a man's ability to command authority supporting a woman's claim to either emotional or physical femininity. As such, while the affective education of Adela Cathcart and the Light Princess doubles as a physical cure, the secret of its success lies in the heroine's revived ability to fall in love with an appropriate (manly) man. MacDonald's narratives of feminine development therefore conclude with marriage and the re-assertion of a functional domestic hierarchy, demonstrating an association between domestic paternalism, feminine emotion and religious faith that (I argue) is bound up in the representation of the feminine body as incorporeal. Where one aspect of feminine development is dysfunctional, all aspects fail, allowing MacDonald to refract narratives of improper female behaviour through depictions of damaged bodies, emotional apathy, religious doubt and domestic conflict. Moreover, his use

of emotion to express feminine 'health' allows him to use non-physical descriptions to express the impact of a physical body that is otherwise rendered intangible.

When Mara is introduced in *Lilith* (1895), MacDonald draws a parallel between her sadness and archetypes of suffering womanhood. She claims that some people 'take me for Lot's wife, lamenting over Sodom; and some think I am Rachel, weeping for her children; but I am neither of those' (MacDonald, 1895: 104). Unlike the religious characters she is compared to, Mara weeps constantly without apparent provocation. Importance is placed on the fact of her weeping, rather than the event that stimulates her tears. Indeed, despite the frequency with which MacDonald uses the re-awakening of emotion to express an ability to love, the emotion described is most often signified by tears. In part, this can be traced to a persistent sense (as expressed by Margaret Oliphant) that suffering women are 'picturesque and attractive' (Pykett, 1992: 60).

Her comment described the media's fascination with stories from the divorce courts in the late 1850s, however MacDonald's stance on the issue of domestic violence appears too conflicted for this to be a conscious association.[172] Rather, a state of generalised sadness replaces reactive emotion for MacDonald's feminine characters, deftly separating the affective state from physical or material experience. While the orphaned Annie Anderson of *Alec Forbes of Howglen* (1865) is subjected to the insensitive and bullying treatment of the Bruce family, the sadness that infuses her characterisation has no apparent origin, and pre-dates both her introduction to her foster-father Robert Bruce, and her own father's death. Like Mara, Annie's weeping is seldom a reaction to a specified occurrence. MacDonald describes her eyes as 'sunken cells', and notes that while Annie seldom wept, her eyes 'looked well acquainted with tears – like fountains that had been full yesterday' (MacDonald, 1865b: I, 66). Even when she is at her merriest, it is 'in a sober, douce, and maidenly fashion' (MacDonald, 1865b: II, 54). MacDonald's association of sobriety with 'maidenliness' is strengthened by his personification of grief as a maiden who 'will not come when she is called for; but if you leave her alone, she will come of herself' (MacDonald, 1865b: II, 253). Far from describing *disobedience* as a 'maidenly virtue', this image depicts grief as a virginal

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[172] For information on MacDonald's treatment of domestic violence, see Chapter 7: Urban Environments, Sexuality and Domestic Control.

woman who, failing to come 'when she is called for' is kept separate from the material stimulus that 'calls' her.

While McGillis notes the importance of tears in MacDonald's narratives of feminine development, as signs of 'sorrow and happiness', 'self-pity and compassion for others' and 'an understanding of the beauty and sorrow of life' (McGillis, 2003: 90), he does not explore the full significance of sadness as a trait of femininity, nor its role in the obfuscation of the female body. In the case of Annie Anderson, as with Adela Cathcart and the Light Princess, emotion becomes the medium by which MacDonald separates the feminine spirit from the material world. Annie's state of generalised sadness is associated with an inability to directly influence the world around her. Even when MacDonald relates her aunt's description of her as a '*royt* lassie' (MacDonald, 1865b: I, 24), he does so in a way that emphasises her vulnerability, passivity and dependency – an association that is spelled out in *What's Mine's Mine* with the suggestion that 'What is called independence may really be want of sympathy' (MacDonald, 1886: I, 302). When Annie Anderson escapes from her aunt's temper, we are told that she runs to the barn 'like a mouse to its hole' (MacDonald, 1865b: I, 24), strengthening the image of a defenceless nature instinctively seeking protection. Furthermore, in response to the aunt's criticism of Annie's adventurous nature, MacDonald asserts that her escapades are 'the result of faith, and not of hardihood' (MacDonald, 1865b: I, 24), rejecting the suggestion of Annie's physical abilities by translating them into passive spiritual strength. Underscoring Annie's lack of physical aptitude, MacDonald informs us that she is affected by a 'feebleness of constitution' that gives rise to an almost narcoleptic tendency to fall asleep 'if she came upon any place that took her fancy' (MacDonald, 1865b: I, 24). Annie's 'feebleness of constitution' acts to remove her from physical action, just as her tendency to slip in and out of consciousness removes her from the physical world. This symbolic incorporeality later becomes absorbed into her character, as an unwillingness to alter any part of her situation. Physical passivity becomes social passivity, with the result that the assertion 'nothing delighted her more than blind submission' (MacDonald, 1865b: I, 212) becomes yet another example of her unwillingness, or inability, to assert independence or engage with the physical world.

Annie's lack of agency is drawn to its logical extreme in moments of physical danger, underscoring the incongruity of a physical body that is unable to react. In such instances, her utter passivity renders her dependent upon external intervention, leaving the actions of her own body to be articulated by proxies. When the vindictive schoolmaster (Mr Malison) threatens to whip Annie, she stands in submissive acceptance of her punishment while the rain-water outside rebels against the confines of the gutter. Malison is prevented from beating her when a 'choked' grate causes the gutter water to flood the schoolroom (MacDonald, 1865b: I, 69). Like the 'fountains that had been full yesterday' (MacDonald, 1865b: I, 66) the choked grate and flood waters externalise Annie's tears, while simultaneously allowing MacDonald to remove any retaliative measures to events outside her body.

In a similar situation, when Annie is bitten by her foster-father's dog Juno, she remains quiescent while her class-mates (led by 'the General' Alec Forbes) retaliate on her behalf. The scene is a strange one, creating a parallel between a military conflict and the defence of an idealised 'woman-child' against an aggressor. It is a similar tale to that seen in 'The Broken Swords', when the defence of womanhood becomes synonymous with national defence.[173] Even the dog's name highlights the parallel between the defence of the nation and the defence of womanhood, with the Roman Goddess Juno being associated with birth, marriage and war. However, the actions of the 'army' are discomforting. Following a series of military-style strategy meetings, the children trap Juno in the street and proceed to stone her, kick her, and finally strangle her, leaving the erstwhile 'brute' lying 'neck and tail together in ignominious peace' (MacDonald, 1865b: I, 149).

The cheerful, almost jocular tone of the passage jars with the graphic descriptions of violence, making the attack on Juno appear as a childhood game. However, the symbolic victory of the children over the dog contains significant implications for the defence and maintenance of femininity. When Alec declares that they should 'Stane her to death [...] like the man 'at brak the Sabbath', his suggestion is upheld with the cry, 'Broken banes for broken skins' (MacDonald, 1865b: I, 136). The breaking of Annie's skin is therefore synonymised with the breaking of the Sabbath, marking Annie as a spiritual being without physical identity. Likewise, Juno's willingness to bite Annie leads to her being described as

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[173] See page 30.

sacrilegious. Still more intriguing is MacDonald's portrayal of Juno as 'an animal of the dog kind' rather than a dog (MacDonald, 1865b: I, 135). He corroborates this by stating that 'She had the nose and the legs of a bull-dog, but was not by any means thorough-bred, and her behavior was worse than her breed' (MacDonald, 1865b: I, 135). Like the bear in *A Rough Shaking*, whose physical suffering is necessitated by a dangerously violent temperament, Juno's treatment is portrayed as the necessary resolution to a national threat. However, just as the bear's body doubles for that of his malevolent working-class keeper Glum Gunn, so does Juno's body appear as more than an animal threat – 'an animal of dog-kind' rather than a dog. MacDonald's comment that she is not a 'thorough-bred' suggests both illegitimacy and low status, once again bringing images of the class-based body to support a moral designation. Moreover, her habit of biting children demonstrates an unmaternal nature at odds with her namesake. These qualities together apparently justify the extremity of her punishment, with physical suffering acting as a 'cure' for her unfeminine and 'ill-bred' behaviour – a cure which MacDonald describes as a 'ministry of pain' in the novel *What's Mine's Mine* (MacDonald, 1886: I, 169). The beneficial nature of the 'cure' is revealed when Juno is next seen 'looking like the resuscitated corpse of a dog', gone from attacking children's legs to fearing them as 'fearful instruments of vengeance, in league with stones and cords' (MacDonald, 1865b: I, 152; 153). The ability of the children to regulate Juno's behaviour through physical punishment acts as testament to her unfeminine nature, highlighting her body as a presence to be acted upon. As such, she appears as a foil to Annie Anderson, whose emotional condition means that her physical body is effectively removed from the narrative, isolating her from both social interaction and individual agency. Annie's body (or lack thereof) therefore becomes an articulation of submission and obedience, whereas Juno's damaged body articulates enforced submission as a consequence of rebellion – the feminine body becoming tangible, so that suffering can be used to promote moral rehabilitation within a dangerous and destructive womanhood.

The spiritual benefit of suffering is a recurring theme in MacDonald's narratives of feminine development, and it is the nature of the suffering (as spiritual, emotional or physical) that allows us to judge the relative femininity of the suffering woman. The cure for the Light Princess lies in the provocation of tears rather than in her torture and burial, however the extremity of Juno's behaviour necessitates physical suffering and learned restraint. In *What's Mine's Mine* MacDonald comments that 'The man who would spare DUE suffering is not

wise. There are powers to be born, creations to be perfected, sinners to be redeemed [...] that could be born, perfected, redeemed, in no other way' [MacDonald, 1886: I, 169]. Juno's punishment is a more extreme version of Malcolm's violent control over his mare Kelpie in *Malcolm* and *The Marquis of Lossie*, reminding the reader that 'so long as my mare is not able to be a law to herself, I must be a law to her too' (MacDonald, 1878: 95).

In *Alec Forbes of Howglen*, the death of Tibbie Dyster demonstrates the point of divide between suffering as a state of femininity, and one of corrective punishment. For Tibbie, 'blind submission' transforms physical suffering into an articulation of faith. Trapped in her house by rising flood waters, Tibbie and Annie are presented with many chances to escape – yet in response to Annie's anxiety, Tibbie asks 'What cares for *that* watter! [...] Do ye think he canna manage *hit*!' (MacDonald, 1865b: II, 290). Even when the flood waters reach her bed, Tibbie advises, 'Gin we be i' the watter, the watter's i' the how o' His han'. Gin we gang to the boddom, He has only to open's fingers, an' there we are, lyin' i' the loof o' 's han', dry and warm. Lie still' (MacDonald, 1865b: II, 290). Tibbie's faith is proven when she takes no action to save her own life, choosing to lie still in her bed while the flood waters rise to drown her. Drawing a parallel between Tibbie's faith and her cottage, she remarks that 'the rains may fa', and the wins may blaw, and the floods may ca at the hoosie, but it winna fa', it canna fa', for it's fund't upo' a rock' (MacDonald, 1865b: II, 274). Her demonstration of faith is rewarded by the fact that she is not swept away, and the villagers find her drowned body still lying on the bed.

Obfuscation through Victimisation

The theme of female (and feminine) suffering demonstrates that MacDonald's narratives, like the discourses of John Ruskin and many others of his acquaintance, paint the female body as an intensely divided symbol. Despite borrowing from a wide range of discourses (including female education, employment, prostitution and marital rights) this body coheres around a powerful image of home that polarises the female between the a priori domestic feminine and the corrupted (or self-destructive) non-domestic monster. Both the dog Juno (*Alec Forbes of Howglen*) and the fallible Juliet Faber (*Paul Faber, Surgeon*) act against their 'natural' inclination with catastrophic results, the one suffering physical torture for biting a child while

the other is pushed to the edge of insanity through premarital sexual contact. As a result, each becomes a dichotomised image of fallen womanhood that is at once victim and threat. It is an act of polarisation that closely resembles MacDonald's representation of oppressed workers as both sympathetic victims and rebellious chartists that must be safely immobilised for the sake of social stability.[174]

In the 1891 novel *A Rough Shaking*, this dichotomy is expressed in the diverse animal bodies the Halliwell's menagerie, with both the bull Nimrod and Glum Gunn's bear threatening discord while fighting their chains.[175] However, alongside the images of rebelling beasts (and men), we likewise see examples of vulnerable and disempowered creatures, whose spiritual purity is measured by their willingness to suffer passively for the sake of those they consider to be their masters. In *A Rough Shaking,* this is most clearly articulated by Clare's closest animal friends, the puma (Pummy) and dog (Abidel). Against the backdrop of rebelling beasts, Pummy demonstrates the spiritual benefit of submission that is closely associated with Christian faith. This is emphasised by MacDonald's translation of 'puma' to mean 'The Christian's Friend', and MacDonald justifies this by noting that despite Pummy's confinement in a menagerie cage, he was a 'great wild philosopher' who 'made the most of the bars and floor and roof' being 'joyous in closest imprisonment!' (MacDonald, 1891b: 259). Similarly, the dog Abdiel (translated as 'Servant of God') appears as a self-sacrificial creature who surrenders his existence to the will of his master.

Curiously, despite being a male dog Abdiel's characterisation is distinctly feminine, being completely defenceless and dependent upon his master. From the moment of his introduction, Abdiel's loyal passivity is demonstrated when, despite being close to starvation, he wags his tail 'with wild homage and the delight of presenting the rat to one he would fain make his master', after which he elects to follow Clare with absolute devotion (MacDonald, 1891b: 186). When Clare tries to find work, Abdiel cares for Clare's adopted daughter. Likewise, when Clare is arrested the dog waits outside, despite such abuse that we are told 'it was much that he had escaped death from ill-usage' (MacDonald, 1891b: 225). Indeed, throughout the novel, Abdiel suffers as a direct result of his subservience to Clare, frequently absorbing the violence intended for his master. When Clare makes an enemy of 'Glum Gunn' at a

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[174] See page 18.
[175] See page 155.

menagerie, Gunn retaliates by torturing the dog, holding him by the neck before a crowd of spectators, and threatening to cut the animal's throat. The parallel between Abdiel and Clare is reinforced when Clare realises that 'Abdiel's life was in imminent danger! That his own was in the same predicament did not occur to him' (MacDonald, 1891b: 283). Later, this scene is re-enacted when Gunn throws the defenceless dog into the puma's cage in full view of a crowd, who look upon his actions as entertainment (MacDonald, 1891b: 363). By the end of the scene, we are left with the suspicion that both Abdiel and the puma are dead, having been killed in defence of their mutual master Clare. Once again, we are offered a parallel between the violence inflicted on Clare, and that apparently suffered by the defenceless animal body. Having been knocked unconscious by Glum Gunn, Clare awakens alone to find that his face is covered in what we are led to believe is the blood of his friends – however, his first assumption is that the blood is his own.

In the passive suffering of Abdiel and the puma, we see an echo of the blurred discourses of the animal rights and marital rights debates instigated in the 1850s – discourses which Barbara Caine remarks led to an increasing association between the image of the suffering woman, and representations of animal cruelty (Caine, 1992: 106). Like the female body, contemporary representations of the animal body were polarised between contradictory constructions of animal nature. Traditional images of savage, uncivilised, dangerous animals found competition with defenceless and innocent creatures whose alienation from human and material society echoed the association between femininity, helplessness (or dependence) and spirituality. Indeed, Caine demonstrates that even amongst those campaigning for women's rights, the correlation between abused women and abused animals was frequently made. In particular, she notes the popularity of claims that 'those very men who participated and even delighted in experimentation which involved the torture of animals were more than likely to engage in the sexual exploitation and the cruel treatment of women' (Caine, 1992: 106). The link between vivisection and sexual exploitation is made explicit in MacDonald's novel *Paul Faber, Surgeon*, demonstrating an interesting assumption that a woman's loss of virginity is metaphorically linked to the torture and dismemberment of the animal body.

In a chapter entitled 'The Groans of the Inarticulate', the heroic Thomas Wingfold uses the rhetoric of the antivivisectionist movement to link practitioners of 'experimental physiology'

and men who are willing to insult or seduce women. When a man demonstrates a willingness to 'focus the burning glass of science upon the animal', MacDonald assumes a willingness to 'speak contemptuous words of the yellow old maid' (MacDonald, 1879b: II, 101). Moreover, he asserts that such a man would be unmoved by the knowledge that 'she was reduced to all but misery by the self-indulgence of a brother, to whom the desolation of a sister was but the pebble to pave the way to his pleasures,' or by realising that 'there is no one left her now to love […] but the creature which he regards merely as a box of nature's secrets, worthy only of being rudely ransacked for what it may contain' (MacDonald, 1879b: II, 101).

Through the image of the vivisected animal, MacDonald draws an analogy between the vivisector and the seducer, and also between the sexually experienced women and mutilated animal bodies. The perceived danger to women is made explicit in when Paul Faber exposes his vivisecting assistant: '*You* set up for a doctor! I would sooner lose all the practice I ever made, than send *you* to visit woman or child, you heartless miscreant!'[176] (MacDonald, 1879b: II, 76). Witnessing the assistant's refusal to protect one vulnerable creature, Faber doubts his willingness to protect another. Later, MacDonald rationalises his anti-vivisectionist stance, claiming that animals 'are for our use and service, but neither to be trodden under the foot of pride, nor misused as ministers, at their worst cost of suffering, to our inordinate desires of ease' (MacDonald, 1879b: II, 97). In the image of an escaped laboratory dog, MacDonald demonstrates the inherent danger of so abusing women and animals. Mutilated to the point of dangerous insanity, the dog rushes through a crowd 'in an agony of soundless terror', seeming 'likely to tear from himself a part of his body at every bound' (MacDonald, 1879b: II, 78). Transformed from an innocent creature to an insane, self-destructive and uncontrollable animal by the practise of vivisection, we see paralleled a female body, driven from submission to wild insanity by abuse.[177]

The association between vivisection (or physical torture) and lost virginity confirms a pervasive correlation between themes of sexuality, violence and control in MacDonald's later

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[176] Ironically, MacDonald's son Greville wrote a rather more sympathetic chapter on the practice of vivisection in *The Ethics of Revolt* (MacDonald, 1907).

[177] Once again, we see here a curious parallel between the writings of George MacDonald and Wilkie Collins, whose anti-vivisection narrative *Heart and Science* was published in 1883. Collins, like MacDonald, draws a parallel between the vivisected bodies of the animals in Dr. Benjulia's laboratory, and the suffering of humans – yet Collins expands his parallel beyond the representation of the victimised or brutalised female body, instead portraying the suffering of the human 'animals' in the crowded London environment (Collins, 1883).

novels. Bound or imprisoned by their abusers (or by convention), abused animals become potent symbols of female restriction and enforced subordination. However, while in the example above we see how vivisection narratives articulate the plight of seduced women, images of animal cruelty are employed throughout MacDonald's narratives to debate themes ranging from enforced marriage and property ownership to custody legislation and education. By asserting control over animal bodies, both MacDonald's manly and unmanly characters metaphorically employ the medium of pain to enforce control over the obfuscated feminine (and visible unfeminine) body – while the extremity of violence suffered remains hidden behind the de-humanising, de-personalising veneer of animal cruelty.

In *Donal Grant*, images of animal cruelty create a subtle sub-text that alludes to future narrative events. When Donal enters the castle, he sees 'two or three riding whips, a fishing rod, several pairs of spurs' and 'what seemed like a plan of the estate' (MacDonald, 1883: I, 103). By placing the map alongside tools of animal torture or compulsion, MacDonald foreshadows the Earl's attempt to take ownership of the castle from Lady Arctura through a process of abduction, imprisonment and forced marriage. Throughout the narrative, injuries sustained by animals are revisited on Arctura's body. Lord Forgue's brutal control of his horse causes Donal to intercede, saying 'I tell you, my lord, the curb-chain is too tight! The animal is suffering as you can have no conception of, or you would pity him' (MacDonald, 1883: I, 144). The narrator informs us that to Forgue, horses were 'creatures to be compelled, not friends with whom to hold sweet concert' (MacDonald, 1883: I, 142). When Forgue attempts to beat the horse for insubordination, Donal throws him out of his saddle, and proceeds to demonstrate that control is more swiftly asserted through gentle persuasion than violence.

The parallel between horse and woman is made when Forgue steals Arctura's own horse, leaving it lame. Later, that same horse collapses from its injury and rolls on Arctura, crushing her ankle. The passage alludes to Arctura's subsequent kidnap, and the attempt of the Earl to enforce her marriage to Lord Forgue. Both the kidnap and the injury become mortal wounds, associating physical restriction with the damaged animal body. In an image that recalls the too-tight curb chain on Forgue's horse, the abducted Arctura is forced to lie on top of another woman's corpse, with her arm chained to the bed-post by a too-tight rusty ring. When he

finds her, Donal is horrified – but not by the presence of the woman's corpse, nor by the body of the Earl's infant son (left to decompose on an altar). Instead, he notes that 'her hand was swollen, and the skin abraded,' and he exclaims 'He forced it on! [...] How it must hurt you!' (MacDonald, 1883: III, 221). As with Forgue's horse, the manacle articulates ownership and control of a rebellious nature, referring (in Arctura's case) to enforced marriage and potential marital rape. Like the horse's curb-chain, Donal finds Arctura's manacle too tight to remove. Instead, he pulls the staple from the bed-post, and leads Arctura to safety with the chain wrapped around her arm. Rather than being released from her manacles, ownership of her body is simply transferred to her future husband, Donal Grant.

In a similar association of physical control and husbandly authority, when Paul Faber first meets Juliet in *Paul Faber, Surgeon* she is presented as a patient suffering with pleurisy. Feeling 'unmanned' by her 'pitiful entreaty' and 'dumb appeal', he decides to phlebotimise, yet the operation is filled with sexual innuendo. His hands tremble, forcing him to 'ruthlessly cut through the linen and lace' of his patient's nightdress. As he makes the incision, reluctant to make 'even such an insignificant breach and blemish as the shining steel betwixt his forefinger and thumb must occasion,' Juliet trembles, acknowledging 'the intruding sharpness' as 'the red parabola rose from the golden bowl' (MacDonald, 1879b: I, 60). The explicit and decadent language portrays the treatment as a seduction. However, an undiagnosed clotting disorder results in excessive blood loss, leaving her unconscious. In an attempt to save her life, Faber uses his own blood in a transfusion. Again, the imagery is overtly sexual. 'With the help of a probe, [Faber] inserted the nozzle in the wound, and gently forced in the blood' (MacDonald, 1879b: I, 126). The correlation between Faber's actions and a sexual encounter is strengthened by his consideration that 'the thing might be hateful to her. She might be in love, and then how she must abominate the business, and detest him!' (MacDonald, 1879b: I, 160).

During the operation, Faber falls in love with Juliet and later asks her to marry him. Despite her initial reluctance (based upon knowledge of her own sexual history), his medical intervention compels Juliet to accept his proposal when she considers that 'He has a claim to me. I am his property. He found me a castaway on the shore of Death, and gave me *his* life to live with' (MacDonald, 1879b: II, 42). Juliet's autonomy is effectively removed via the

expulsion of her blood, and the introduction of Faber's. Later in the narrative, her lack of autonomy is confirmed when she begs her husband to purify her body by whipping her, so combining his authority with the right of physical chastisement. As such, a narrative describing the social consequences of premarital sexual activity implicitly coheres around the violation and reassertion of patriarchal domestic authority. When Faber refuses to whip his wife (to the narrator's exasperation), guilt compels her to leave him. Their relationship is only restored by Faber's symbolic reclamation of his wife's body. Replicating the scene that first causes Juliet to exclaim 'I am his property', Faber finds her dying of blood loss following the birth of their child. Once again, he draws blood from his arm and forces it into her veins, thereby marking her body as his own.

In *Paul Faber, Surgeon*, the transfer of blood therefore instigates the loss of Juliet's autonomy as an individual woman, and the transference of her identity into that of her husband. It is a striking precursor to the famous pacification of Lucy Westenra at the hands of Abraham Van Helsing and her fiancé Arthur Holmwood in Bram Stoker's *Dracula,* in which a similar transfusion of her husband's blood combats the vampiric infection, transforming her from a sexualised monster into a passive woman. In both instances, the identity of a sexualised woman is overlaid with that of her future husband, metaphorically making each couple 'one body' while simultaneously robbing the woman of her free will.

By symbolically re-writing Juliet's identity with his own, Paul Faber effectively locks his wife into the redemptive framework of the domestic structure, rendering her completely dependent upon him as the source, not only of her physical and legal existence, but also of her moral compass. This forceful imposition of dependency is revealing when it comes to arguing MacDonald's position on marital reform, arguments against which frequently focused on the naturally dependent nature of women (Pykett, 1992: 55). In MacDonald's narratives, movements towards female independence as regards sexuality, education, work or property ownership are forcefully curtailed, with the idealised feminine status being awarded to those who are rendered unable to act in their own interests.

In *Donal Grant*, the similar imposition of dependency over Lady Arctura has significant implications for MacDonald's position on the female ownership of property. As the orphan of

the eldest Lord Morven, Arctura is left under the guardianship of her volatile uncle, whose love of his niece appears driven by his desire for the familial property remaining in Arctura's control. When Arctura acknowledges the mercenary basis of her uncle's love saying, he 'would have liked me better, perhaps, if I had been dependent on him,' (MacDonald, 1883: II, 149) she outlines a perceived threat to the masculine social role in the wake of the 2nd Married Women's Property Act. By suggesting a situation in which Arctura is materially dependent upon a cruel, desensitised male relative, MacDonald appears to claim justification for the case that women should be allowed to maintain control of their own property – at least, until they should happen to fall in love with a 'true man'. However, Arctura's possession of the property is encouraged by the urgings of Miss Carmichael – the daughter of the local minister and the source of the same destructive theological education that leads Arctura to suspect God of the same injustices that she sees being perpetrated by her uncle.

Miss Carmichael's malevolent influence is characterised in her description as 'self-sufficient, assured, with scarce shyness enough for modesty' implying that the lack of dependence and uncertainty render a woman 'immodest', and therefore unwomanly (MacDonald, 1883: I, 174). Under her tutelage, Arctura suffers (again, like Adela Cathcart) 'from conjunction of a lovely conscience with an ill-instructed mind', and finds herself torn between the fulfilment of her patriarchal duties to her uncle, and devotion to a cruel God that she cannot love (MacDonald, 1883: I, 172). In submitting to the influences of both her uncle and (though Miss Carmichael) the religion of her childhood, we are shown how the very qualities that confirm Arctura's femininity – loyalty, reverence, obedience – leave her vulnerable to the influences of corrupt instructors. This is confirmed when MacDonald declares that 'just because she was true, authority had immense power over her' (MacDonald, 1883: I, 176). Similarly, when he complains of 'evil doctrines […] forced upon some shrinking nature, weak to resist through the very reverence which is its excellence,' he not only criticises the perpetrator, but praises the victim for the qualities that allow her to be corrupted (MacDonald, 1883: II, 202). Therefore, Arctura's 'shrinking nature,' weakness and susceptibility are upheld as the type of true femininity, a situation that leaves her at dependent upon Donal Grant's corrective capabilities.

Donal's education of Arctura, like Harry Armstrong's education of Adela Cathcart, focuses upon moral and religious themes that nevertheless partake of the changing social legislation of the 1880s. In teaching her about a loving God, Donal simultaneously helps Arctura to strengthen her resolve against her uncle, and reinforces the divine nature of patriarchal obedience. When Miss Carmichael suggests that Arctura should use her ownership of the familial home as leverage to force her uncle to dismiss Donal, the narrator explains 'She did not see that that was just the thing to fetter the action of a delicate-minded girl' (MacDonald, 1883: I, 194). Moreover, in the face of her uncle's increasing cruelty Arctura's love of obedience makes her consider surrendering the castle to his control. When her youngest cousin Davie suggests that she should maintain ownership, she asks, 'you think I should make my castle my husband?' (MacDonald, 1883: II, 173). This not only indicates a perceived incompatibility between property ownership and marriage (an incompatibility ended by the 2nd Married Women's Property Act) but suggests that property (and its attendant duties) would replace the role of husband in a woman's life. However, when she asks Donal, 'what do you take to be the duty of one inheriting a property? Ought a woman to get rid of it, or attend to it herself?' he asserts that God, rather than family, is the true originator of property, and that property-owners therefore have duties to God, and not to their families (MacDonald, 1883: II, 175). Moreover, he argues 'you were sent into the world to take the property [...] God expects you to perform the duties of it; they are not to be got rid of by throwing the thing aside, or giving them to another to do for you' (MacDonald, 1883: II, 175). Within this argument, Donal appears to assert the divine provenance of property – a belief that negates the 'self-help' ethos of Harry Armstrong by asserting that property is given to the wealthy at the will of God, to provide security for their tenants and to promote moral behaviours. However, in the concluding chapters Donal contradicts his own advice when, having married Arctura and been named as her legal beneficiary, he refuses to inherit the property upon her death.

Donal's refusal to accept the property is integral to our understanding of the inheritance debate at the heart of *Donal Grant* – a debate that encompasses not only property legislation, but the moral and legal ramifications of aristocratic inheritance and illegitimacy. When he is asked, 'may it not be your duty to take it, Mr. Grant?' he responds 'I have reflected, and do not think God wants me to take it,' indicating that he has been given control over the property for the purpose of ensuring that it is passed to its rightful owner (MacDonald, 1883: III, 300).

The different patterns of inheritance between title and property in *Donal Grant* act to highlight the unworthy nature of the Earl's family to hold either, and underscore the danger of property within the hands of an unworthy man. Lord Forgue's callous treatment of his subordinates (whether Eppy, the villagers, horses or dogs) parallels the cruel actions of factors illustrated in the contemporary novels *The Marquis of Lossie* (1877) and *What's Mine's Mine* (1886). These narratives, embodying the Scottish anger at the actions of factors and lairds during the Clearances, assert that property in the hands of unworthy men acts as a weapon towards the dependent individuals that the true man is meant to protect. Forgue's unsuitability for such a position of authority is asserted by his lack of a legal right to rule, as evidenced by his illegitimacy. The discovery of Lord Forgue's illegitimacy therefore becomes a narratological symbol of both masculine moral and social failure, in the same way that the eventual discovery of Malcolm's legitimacy (according to Scottish law) confirms his moral and legal right to rule. While Donal does not feel bound to speak out 'for the mere succession to an empty title,' (MacDonald, 1883: III, 141) the danger that Forgue could incorrectly succeed to both title and property (through marriage to Arctura) renders the matter 'his business', and creates the hypothetical justification for Donal to warn Arctura about her uncle's duplicitous and murderous nature. As such, it becomes Donal Grant's duty (as a true man) to wrest both property and title away from the illegitimate line, and to ensure its correct succession. In doing so, he fulfils the Earl's wish to see the 'title and property united' (MacDonald, 1883: III, 208).

Arctura's position within the property-narrative is therefore transformed from one of ownership to one of caretaker, the role of her death merely ensuring the correct succession of the moral male line. When she considers that 'Her father would not have left her the property without good reasons for doing so; and of those reasons some might well have lain in the character of the man before her!' (MacDonald, 1883: II, 268) she accepts that the role of female inheritance is a useful tool to be used only in instances of failed patriarchy. Despite her anger at discovering her uncle's plot to marry her to Lord Forgue, thereby making her 'a mere wrappage to her property – the paper of a parcel!' (MacDonald, 1883: II, 173) by the conclusion of the narrative she has become exactly that – a woman whose convenient inheritance, marriage and death allows the divinely-gifted property and title to pass out of the hands of unworthy men, and into the hands of a pure male scion of the family. Donal's accusation to the Earl, that 'You wanted her to die unless you could compel her to marry your

son, that the title and property might go together' (MacDonald, 1883: III, 248) is therefore translated into an unspoken acceptance that Arctura must die following marriage to a true man, so that the title and property might pass together to the rightful recipient. This is confirmed by the new Earl's reverence of Donal, who assumes the role of moral educator to the township and 'had the more influence both with landlord and tenants that he had no *interest* in the property' (MacDonald, 1883: III, 308). Cured by Donal of the external corruption inflicted upon her as a result of her innate femininity, Arctura is able to stabilise and secure the transmission of property into the hands of an man willing to receive the property 'as God wishes', and to fulfil his duties both to God and his tenants.

In many ways, Arctura's death from a crushed ankle (sustained from a fallen horse) mirrors that of Euphra Cameron in *David Elginbrod*, yet while Raeper asserts that such injuries to the limbs are indicative of sexual experience in MacDonald's narratives (Raeper, 1988: 206), in the case of Arctura it instead serves to render her dependent upon Donal, to whom she cedes both her property and her hand in marriage. Like the removal of Lilith's hand at the hands of her ex-husband in the 1895 *Lilith,* the crushing of Arctura's ankle symbolises the curtailment of her independence. Indeed, even in the case of Euphra Cameron, the injury to her ankle is represented as a positive experience that, while leading to her death yet instigates her moral reform through the enforced truncation of an independent nature. As she begins to succumb to her illness, we are told that 'Something very much analogous to the change in Euphra takes place in a man when he first learns that his beliefs must become acts' (MacDonald, 1863: III, 307). Of course, for Euphra, it is precisely the opposite – her acts must become beliefs, just as her body must become inactive, since 'The Ideal is the only absolute Real; and it must become the Real in the individual life as well' (MacDonald, 1863: III, 307). As she repents, she confides, 'I begin to like my lameness [...] just because God made it, and bade me bear it. May I not think it is a mark on me from his hand?' (MacDonald, 1863: III, 364).

Euphra's gratitude for her injury is echoed by Connie Walton following a fall from a horse in *The Seaboard Parish* (1868). Unlike Arctura, Connie's accident is not precipitated by any form of sexual encounter; rather, it occurs following an argument with her father over her desire to leave the family home in search of work (MacDonald, 1868a: I, 19). However, her father warns her that by leaving home and taking up work, she threatens her own spiritual

nature. Describing an inverse relationship between spirituality and freedom, Mr. Walton explains, 'it's all for the sake of your wings that you're kept in your nest' (MacDonald, 1868a: I, 164). Before they can reach an agreement the decision is taken out of Connie's hands when her horse rears at the skeletal image of a lightning-struck tree. The image of the death-like tree recalls the coffin-body of the Alder Maiden in *Phantastes*, using the memory of her unnatural mobility to prevent Connie from leaving the familial home. Taking place on her 18th birthday, the accident allows Connie lose her impertinent child-nature, and to enter womanhood as a sombre and thoughtful paraplegic.

Despite her early frustration, Connie never leaves her familial home. Rendered utterly dependent on her family (and later, her husband), she is described as a more complete woman, 'early ripened by the hot sun of suffering, and the self-restraint which pain had taught her' (MacDonald, 1872: I, 105). Confirming the inverted feminine relationship of the spiritual and the physical, the narrator notes of another dying woman that 'The more her body decayed about her, the more her spirit seemed to come alive' (MacDonald, 1872: III, 226). Connie herself attributes her new spiritual devotion to her disability in *The Vicar's Daughter*, exclaiming to her sister that in spiritual terms 'I have got ever so far before you: I've nearly forgotten how to walk!' (MacDonald, 1872: I, 106). Through the accident, Connie is forced to comply with her father's wish that she both grow spiritually, and give up her desire for work to remain in the domestic sphere. Moreover, as Connie realises that her earlier dream of liberty is not compatible with spirituality, she begins to take pleasure in the disablement of her body.

In Connie's immobilisation, as with the injuries sustained by Arctura and Euphrasia, we see how an injury to the limbs articulates an inhibition of movement that is at once social and physical. Like the immobilisation of the female cadaver in *Alec Forbes of Howglen*, this imposed inactivity is portrayed as a beautiful and spiritual experience that (while eventually leading to death) renders a woman at once more passive, more attractive and more dependent, demonstrating the way in which an idealised woman's body is forcefully separated from the material influences that could serve to corrupt her domestic identity.

Chapter 7: Urban Environments, Sexuality and Domestic Control

Throughout this thesis, I have explored MacDonald's construction of a manly identity predicated upon the need to establish a centre of political, physical, economic or social power within a culture that appeared increasingly alien and uncontrollable. This ideal man – this unifying Soldier body – therefore stands as a line of defence between established societal values and the threat of change, and as such his purpose is fundamentally regressive, rather than progressive. Persistently, he draws us back to a patriarchal 'golden age', establishing the family dynamic as a sublime representation of the social hierarchy, and the Father as the natural choice for social rule. Within each of his novels he offers us the same argument within a different setting, borrowing from contemporary themes and discourses to reinforce the on-going relevance of his narrative. Just as paternalism and manliness resolve the question of moral martial action in 'The Broken Swords', so do they defend against 'unnatural' arguments for eugenics, vivisection and spreading consumerism. Most of all, the soldier body guards against schism, which by its conflicting nature articulates the force of change, the eddying quality that in modern identity-theory we have come to term 'the queer'. Political and religious schism are therefore represented as unmanly, destructive to the very social body that they seek to reform. However, it is not merely social schism that is defeated by the unificatory qualities of the soldier body. Divergent gender identities likewise fall victim to the rigid social rules encapsulating the ideal Man and his moral duty, and, as society grew increasingly fragmented in terms of identity, so did MacDonald's mechanisms for unification grow increasingly brutal in their drive to eliminate the different.

In the previous section, I described the way in which male authority is naturalised in opposition to the female, stripping the idealised feminine from all articulations of physical presence and social power – a sublimation of the body that is at once an ideological construct and a social reality. Within this final chapter, I examine the implications of these processes when taken to their logical extreme. Through the consideration of narratives such as *Paul Faber, Surgeon* (1879) and *Lilith* (1895), we move past the representation and classification of the idealised woman to observe the way in which the trope of incorporeality is portrayed in relation to the *unfeminine* body. In a disturbing distortion of the obfuscative process, the depiction of 'true womanhood' through passive suffering gives rise to graphic images of

imprisonment and control, not as a result of apparent accidents or metaphors, but through the direct actions of reformative masculine characters intent on preserving the sanctity of the domestic environment. Within these narratives, the unfeminine female body is at once dehumanised and neutralised in potent depictions of patriarchal control, forcefully returning the rebellious woman to her allotted place within a domestic environment that becomes synonymous with a prison.

My argument shall once again focus on three forms of enforced obfuscation, cohering around some of the most significant political themes of female subjugation in the latter half of the Victorian era. The first theme is that of urban prostitution during the years of the Contagious Diseases Acts, underscoring the perception that deviation from a feminine identity carried serious implications for the health of the national body. My second theme extends this argument beyond the realm of prostitution, considering MacDonald's treatment of the 'fallen woman' and his divided approach to the sexual double-standard. Finally, I look at the insidiously pervasive theme of domestic violence, noting the role of physical subjugation in the maintenance of the hierarchy of domestic authority. Through these interlocking themes, we are left with the image of MacDonald's heroic man – the muscular soldier, and the corrective father – forcefully imprinting the bodies of rebelling female characters with a divine domesticity for the sake of national order as expressed through the stabilisation of the home.

Unnatural Mobility

Pygmalion-style narratives of immobilised, imprisoned or passive femininity are a common occurrence in MacDonald's work, with the trope of incorporeality used to signify either a willing domestic confinement, or restriction necessitated by unfeminine activity. In considering the classification of behaviours as 'feminine' or 'unfeminine', it can therefore be useful to observe the characterisation of those behaviours which result in the a loss of liberty and independence. Published in 1858, *Phantastes* offers us an intensely symbolic and political view of the female body, being divided between the common stereotypes of domestic ideals and demonic predators. The fantasy narrative is often described as an anomaly within MacDonald's oeuvre – a search for a mother within a body of work almost

exclusively built around the search for a physical and metaphysical father (Wolff, 1961: 331). This maternal focus has fostered a large number of psychoanalytical readings, with Wolff referencing the early death of MacDonald's mother, while Raeper notes the prolific use of 'images of motherhood and nursing' focused around a 'desire for a return to the womb, for reunion with the mother' (Raeper, 1988: 146; Wolff, 1961: 26).

Roderick McGillis and David Holbrook take a slightly different approach, looking closely at MacDonald's representation of women as both maternal and sexualised beings (McGillis, 1990; Holbrook, 2000). Holbrook in particular describes an 'unconscious' social association between sex and death that narrates the conflict between the dangerously sexualised woman and the idolised, spiritual Woman (Holbrook, 2000: 62). However, Holbrook does not fully consider MacDonald's social context when he approaches this association from a psychoanalytical perspective. As a result, he concludes that this divided treatment arises 'from a failure of integration of the need for tender satisfaction in the sensual body-life, and the raptures of idealisation and worship' (Holbrook, 2000: 65). He claims that this 'unconscious hate [...] generates the hostile and evil phantom women in MacDonald's fantasies: they are projections of his own fear and hatred of women' (Holbrook, 2000: 65). Yet aside from Wolff's 1961 theory that sexual frustration underlay many of MacDonald's fairy tales, there is little to suggest that MacDonald's home-life was other than happy. Nor should associations between sexuality and death – common associations in Victorian literature – be taken as evidence of a personal 'fear and hatred of women'. Indeed, the latter half of the nineteenth century was a hotbed of conflicting political, spiritual and scientific debates on the relationship between sexuality and the social body. In 1842 arguments against female employment were grounded on the likely sexualisation of women so employed (Johnson, 2001: 75), while Poovey's investigation into the controversial use of chloroform during labour described a commonly-held medical opinion that the removal of pain would result in the woman being sexually aroused by the process of childbirth (Poovey, 1989: 31). Later years saw similar arguments used against women's education (particularly in the medical and scientific disciplines), property ownership and suffrage, culminating in the famous pacification of the sexualised, child-attacking Lucy Westenra in Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897). Likewise, associations between sexuality and death are prolific in MacDonald's literature – however, I would argue that the primary function is one of political and social comment, rather than the unconscious expression of a psychological conflict.

Phantastes is often taken to be a precursor to the 1895 *Lilith*, yet just as *Lilith* is distinctively *fin de siècle*, so does *Phantastes* embrace the 'Pre-Raphaelite medievalism' of William Morris and Dante Gabriel Rossetti – thematically as well as stylistically (McGillis, 1990: 33). While there have been many attempts to read *Phantastes* in terms of its spiritual and psychological symbolism, there have been few attempts to consider it from a political perspective, as a narrative published contemporaneously with poems such as Christina Rossetti's 'Light Love' (1856) and 'Goblin Market' (written in 1859).[178] Like 'Goblin Market', *Phantastes* uses a fantasy medium to portray the dangers of sexual temptation, to the extent that McGillis describes the protagonist's journey as a quest to 'slay the phallus, to relinquish the desire for ownership' (McGillis, 1990: 44). However, while Rossetti's use of female protagonists implicitly attacks the sexual double-standard, MacDonald's exploration of the male sexual identity is far more conservative. Although MacDonald has been described as a fierce opponent of the sexual double-standard (Raeper, 1988: 260), *Phantastes* is filled with images of female bodies, both restrained and unnaturally mobile, while the protagonist is left free to discover his 'identity' in relation to a wide range of female archetypes, and to 'reconfigure her to his wishes' (McGillis, 1990: 42). Indeed, the mobility of the female body is repeatedly paralleled with her sexuality, which (as Taliarach-Vielmas notes) was frequently bound to corporeality in Victorian narrative (Taliarach-Vielmas, 2007: 36).

In the psychological – and sociological – fairy land of *Phantastes,* the conflict between idealised immobility and destructive activity is vividly represented by the protagonist's encounters with maternal Beech Tree and the seductive Alder Maiden. Encompassing the role of a provider of domestic sanctuary, the Beech Tree protects Anodos from his violent doppelganger (the ogre Ash Tree), and later offers him a talisman made from her own hair to protect him from the attentions of the Alder Maiden (MacDonald, 1858: 49). Like Annie Anderson in *Alec Forbes of Howglen* and Mara in *Lilith*, the Beech Tree's feminine identity

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[178] In common with many works by the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, these poems looked at female sexuality and the consequences of the sexual double standard. The comparison is relevant, since MacDonald was familiar with many members of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, and (as Raeper notes) was heavily influenced by their work (Raeper, 1987: 366; Hein, 1999: 290). MacDonald was friendly with both Dante Gabriel and Christina Rossetti, and maintained close contact with artists within the movement (such as Edward Burne-Jones) and those on the fringe of the movement (such as Arthur Hughes – whose son was engaged to MacDonald's daughter Grace prior to her death – and Alexander Munro). The MacDonald family were also close to William Morris's daughter Mary (May) Morris, and sold their Hammersmith house to William Morris in 1878. The house came to be called Kelmscott House.

is characterised by emotional sadness: her face seems 'very lovely, and solemn from its stillness', and her solemnity is firmly associated with her femininity when she asks, 'Shall I be very happy when I am a woman? I fear not [...] But I long to be a woman for all that' (MacDonald, 1858: 47). Even the gift of the talisman recalls the theme of feminine suffering. She instructs Anodos to cut her hair (being unable to do so herself), after which we are told that 'she shuddered and breathed deep, as one does when an acute pain, steadfastly endured without sign of suffering, is at length relaxed' (MacDonald, 1858: 49). Her gift is rendered even more tragic when Anodos succumbs to the influence of the Alder Maiden, at once ignoring the Beech Tree's warnings and permitting the destruction of the talisman she had suffered to provide.

While the Beech Tree appears as a 'male ideal of a woman as self-sacrificing nurturer' (McGillis, 1990: 41), her actions (outside the circle of her own sphere of influence) are ineffective. She is unable to prevent Anodos from falling victim to the Alder Maiden, nor is she able to defend him from the Ash Tree once he leaves her arms. Indeed, in many respects she (like Annie) lacks a clear physical presence. She is sessile, able to wrap her arms about Anodos in order to protect him, but unable to walk. Visually, Anodos has an 'impression' of her, but can 'see very little of colour or outline' (MacDonald, 1858: 46). His main sense of her (other than that of her arms around him) is auditory, hearing her voice as 'the sound of a gentle wind amidst the leaves of a great tree' (MacDonald, 1858: 46). However, despite her assertion that she is a beech tree rather than a woman, Anodos never doubts her femininity – even when he awakens in the morning to find himself 'lying under a superb beech-tree' with 'great sweeps of curving surface that swelled like undeveloped limbs' (MacDonald, 1858: 50). In contrast, his encounter with the Alder Maiden is full of signs of an unnatural physical presence. When he sees her for the first time, he mistakes her for the Marble Lady of his fantasies – a sleeping woman encased in marble who (like Pygmalion's statue) is 'destined to become an ideal woman in the arms of the sculptor' (MacDonald, 1858: 58). However, while Anodos's relationship to the Marble Lady is one of attempted possession and control – her body being formed in reaction to his songs, with the result that her physical presence exists only at his desire, and in a form that he dictates (Pionke, 2011: 24; 27) – Anodos is himself possessed and controlled by the Alder Maiden.

Unlike either the Marble Lady or the Beech Tree, the Alder Maiden is mobile – a walking tree whose 'beautifully moulded features' carry a look of 'careless dislike', and whose wooden body is described as a 'hollow deformity' (MacDonald, 1858: 77). Horrified, Anodos wonders 'How can beauty and ugliness dwell so near?' yet rationalises his confusion by declaring, 'I am sure she would not look so beautiful if she did not take means to make herself look more beautiful than she is' (MacDonald, 1858: 78; 81). This conflict between appearance and reality at first seems similar to that described between the appearance and reality of the gentleman[179], yet MacDonald's focus on external enhancements contextualises the danger of a hidden deviation from the feminine norm. Like Lilith in 1895, the Alder Maiden 'loves no man', yet 'loves the love of any man […] not for the sake of his love either, but that she may be conscious anew of her own beauty' (MacDonald, 1858: 81). MacDonald describes the Alder Maiden's beauty as a 'self-destructive beauty' which 'is constantly wearing her away within, till, at last, the decay will reach her face, and her whole front, when all the lovely mask of nothing will fall to pieces, and she be vanished for ever' (MacDonald, 1858: 82). Perceiving her first as a beautiful young woman, Anodos comes to see that her body is actually a coffin, and the Alder Maiden 'a walking Death' (MacDonald, 1858: 77).

The Alder Maiden's unnatural mobility, disguised nature and coffin-like form unite images of sexuality and death in a powerful warning about the dangers of prostitution and venereal disease. In the years prior to the implementation of the Contagious Diseases Acts of 1864,1866 and 1869, the subject of prostitution became a matter of national concern, particularly following the 1857 Royal Commission report on the Health of the Army, which noted the high level of venereal disease within the lower ranks of the armed forces (Walkowitz, 1980: 74). Frank Mort notes that subsequent debates provided the foundation for the Contagious Diseases Acts (Mort, 2000), and in *Phantastes* this military context is emphasised by the presence of the Rusty Knight (based on Sir Percivale).

Like Anodos, the Rusty Knight suffers from the shame of being seduced by the Alder Maiden. His rusted armour stands as a metaphor for the state of his masculine honour, and he explains that his armour cannot be polished 'but by the blows of knightly encounter' (MacDonald, 1858: 67). On seeing him for the first time, Anodos notes that the 'white plume

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[179] See page 59.

on his helmet was discoloured and drooping' and concludes, 'He has fallen in a joust with spears' (MacDonald, 1858: 66). The knight's seduction is paralleled with defeat in a military joust, while the 'discoloured and drooping' plume graphically mimics the physical symptoms of a venereal disease. Through images of military decay, MacDonald depicts the physical and moral condition of an army nearly incapacitated by prostitution.

The theme of prostitution throws MacDonald's treatment of female sexuality into sharp relief. While his protagonists may be forgiving of some female characters who succumb to temptation and later repent (for example, Lizzy Findlay in *Malcolm*), MacDonald frequently blurs the boundary between the seduced woman and the prostitute, representing both parties as a threat to home and nation. Even the novel *Sir Gibbie* – one of MacDonald's least dictatorial and most sympathetic novels – describes 'a ghostly woman in rags, with a white, worn face' who appears to the protagonist as 'a ruined, desecrated shrine to the eyes of the saint's own peculiar worshipper' (MacDonald, 1879a: III, 131). The language recalls that of 'The Broken Swords', in which a girl's suicide prevents the 'desecration' of her body. Sexuality therefore becomes a negation of the holy identity of Woman, contrasting Josephine Butler's assertion that every woman is inherently sacred 'even at her lowest, most degraded, and most despised estate' (Liggins, 2003: 40). Like Miss St John in *Robert Falconer* (who 'prefers Bloomsbury to Belgravia, because it is easier to do noble work in it' (MacDonald, 1868b: III, 134), and who works alongside the protagonist in the cause of social reform through individual contact), Josephine Butler willingly accepted prostitutes into her home, believing that they could be rehabilitated by 'sisterhood between middle and working-class women' (Liggins, 2003: 40). However, while MacDonald appears sympathetic to the plight of prostitutes, in *Robert Falconer* and *Sir Gibbie*, the words 'ruin' and 'desecration' indicate his doubt that they could be redeemed in life. Moreover, in *Alec Forbes of Howglen* and *Annals of a Quiet Neighbourhood*, any such sympathy is countered by underlying concerns regarding the level of danger such women posed to the men they encountered, and to the established domestic ideals.

Emma Liggins notes that for many Victorian writers, the question of whether prostitutes could be rehabilitated underpinned the fictional treatment of fallen women (Liggins, 2003: 43), and this tension is clearly observable in MacDonald's narratives as his fallen women

fluctuate between the extremes of demonic behaviour, insanity, and a repentant death or immobilisation that restores their idealised womanhood. Rendered passive by death, the female cadaver in *Alec Forbes of Howglen* is idealised to the extent that Alec feels it necessary to defend her honour.[180] However, her presence in the university dissection room implies that she was destitute, and we are told that the 'terrible scar on the forehead […] indicated too plainly with what brutal companions she had consorted' (MacDonald, 1865b: II, 14). Although we are never explicitly told that she was a prostitute, her previous status is indicated by the insulting remarks of the other medical students, and (particularly relevant for the years of the Contagious Diseases Acts) by the objectification of a body owned by male strangers, and explored by scientific investigation.

Alec's early idealisation of the dead woman's body contrasts his later decision to visit prostitutes – a decision that is portrayed as a consequence of his disbelief in the divine nature of women, following the discovery of Kate Fraser's affair with the callous Patrick Beauchamp. The associations are made apparent when Mr. Cupples attempts to stop him from entering a brothel out of consideration for Alec's mother and hypothetical future wife, leading Alec to exclaim, 'Wife! [...] there's no wife for me' (MacDonald, 1865b: III, 114). Mr. Cupples is horrified by Alec's attitude, replying 'Eh, man! to think nae mair o' women nor *that!'* (MacDonald, 1865b: III, 114). Contrasting Mr. Cupples's apparent respect for wives and mothers as archetypes of womanhood, elsewhere in the narrative femininity and indeed humanity is stripped from prostitutes, or from women who have sexual experience. Just as Kate's affair with Beauchamp removes her as a potential wife, so are prostitutes transformed into predators who 'catch a haud o' young laads, and [...] torment the life oot o' them' (MacDonald, 1865b: III, 118). When Isie Constable confides her fears for Alec to his mother, she insists that they are not women at all, but rather 'men dressed up in women's claes' (MacDonald, 1865b: III, 118).

As inhuman or androgynous predators, the prostitutes (like the Alder Maiden in *Phantastes*) threaten 'a death of unfathomable horror' (MacDonald, 1858: 77), demonstrating the need to cleanse and restrain the 'social disease' of prostitution in order to protect the 'vulnerable' man from sexual (and moral) contagion. Their seductions are sharply contrasted with the

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[180] See page 122.

'actions' of the Beech Tree and Annie Anderson, both of whom are utterly passive in their love of the protagonist, and whose idealised dependency leaves them vulnerable to the consequences of his decisions. Each time Alec returns to home, he grows more distant and condescending towards Annie, and eventually begins to ignore her. Moreover, when he follows Alec home from Aberdeen, Patrick Beauchamp traps Annie in an old castle after she has been abandoned by Alec and Kate. He attempts to kiss her – an event which leaves her terrified and confused. Annie's confusion is a product of her innocence – a quality that is referenced throughout the narrative. Even her love of poetry is dissimilar to that of the more worldly Kate Fraser, who falls victim to the 'Byron fever' (MacDonald, 1865b: II, 120). In contrast, Annie is able to choose 'the right poems by insight, wonderfully avoiding by instinct the unsuitable, without knowing why, and repelled by the mere tone' (MacDonald, 1865b: I, 207). Similarly, although she hears rumours of Alec's involvement with prostitutes, she is too innocent to understand their meaning, and is instead filled with a 'sense of vague horror and pity' (MacDonald, 1865b: III, 119). However, as Alec's future wife, Annie's innocence suggests the potential for another, more material form of suffering.

When Josephine Butler and Elizabeth Wolstenhome formed the Ladies National Association for the Repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts in 1869, their arguments exposed the sexual double-standard that underpinned the legislation, and focused attention on the cruelty and injustice fostered by its implementation. Under the Acts, any woman suspected of prostitution could be forced to undergo medical inspection (often referred to as 'medical rape'), and if found suffering from a venereal disease, could be confined in a locked hospital until cured. Ironically, the men who visited prostitutes were spared this treatment on the grounds that they found it demoralising (Barton, 2011). The Acts therefore carried the assumption that the sexual behaviours of men were both to be expected and to be excused, leading Butler to complain that 'a large section of female society has to be told off – set aside, so to speak, to minister to the irregularities of the excusable man. That section is doomed to death, hurled to despair; while another section of womanhood is kept strictly and almost forcibly guarded in domestic purity' (Hall, 2004: 43). However, while the unequal treatment of men and women exposed the sexual double-standard, it also raised concerns that many married men thereby transmitted sexual diseases such as syphilis to wives who were ignorant of their partner's activities. The theme of prostitution therefore became a double-threat to the sanctity of the domestic ideal – both as a non-domestic and predatory female identity, and as a potential

source of contagion through the unregulated actions of a married client. As such, despite the emphasised physical presence of the sexually active woman in Victorian narrative, Deborah Epstein Nord comments that she 'embodies the possibility of an invisible and uncontrollable invasion of the middle class home' (Epstein Nord, 1995: 82). In *Alec Forbes of Howglen*, Mr. Cupples begs Alec to reconsider his actions, saying 'ye'll wiss ye hadn't, when ye come to wed a bonnie wife' (MacDonald, 1865b: III, 114). Mr. Cupples's words, taken in the context of Butler's arguments, indicates that the closure of the narrative is flawed. The threat to the innocent and ignorant Annie Anderson (and the domestic ideology she represents) is left unresolved, since the couple's mutual suffering can only be negated by a marriage that leaves her open to the potent physical risk of infertility, insanity and death.

The Sexual Double-Standard

Josephine Butler was well acquainted with the MacDonald family, having been introduced by Barbara Bodichon following MacDonald's move to London in 1859 (MacDonald, 2005: 300). However, while Greville MacDonald describes their relationship as one of love and deep respect, MacDonald's treatment of the themes of prostitution and the sexual double-standard – both themes about which Butler was passionate – is deeply ambiguous. Despite participating in active discussions on women's rights, MacDonald's narratives repeatedly exonerate the sexually active man while simultaneously portraying the sexually active woman as destructive and unnatural. Both Anodos and the Rusty Knight are seduced by the Alder Maiden, yet while she assumes a coffin-like, monstrous form the two men are able to erase their sin through 'the blows of knightly encounter' (MacDonald, 1858: 67). Similarly, Alec makes a conscious choice to visit prostitutes, yet is redeemed by the love of the idealised Annie Anderson – while the equally fallible Kate Fraser (seduced by Patrick Beauchamp) finds no alternative except suicide.

In *Annals of a Quiet Neighbourhood* (1867) and *Donal Grant* (1883), MacDonald's position is articulated more emphatically, with the male protagonists believing it to be their duty to chastise two seduced women and to impress on them the depth and irreparable nature of their sin. When Eppy falls pregnant in *Donal Grant*, the protagonist expostulates 'Sic things are no to be hidden! Sae lang's she's i' the warl', the thing has to be kenned o' a' 'at come nigh her'

(MacDonald, 1883: III, 235). Mr. Walton in *Annals of a Quiet Neighbourhood* goes further when castigating the consumptive and depressed Catherine Weir. In a chapter dramatically entitled 'The Devil in Catherine Weir', Mr. Walton reasons that gentle words will not help her, and exclaims 'I have yet to give an account of you. And I have to fear lest my Master should require your blood at my hands' (MacDonald, 1867a: II, 287). Brutally, he outlines the way in which her 'faults' constitute a threat to the morality and safety of the wider society. Emphasising the ideological basis for a legalised sexual double-standard, Mr. Walton exonerates George Everard (her seducer) by claiming that God made Catherine (as a woman) 'with a more delicate sense of purity, with a shrinking from the temptation, with a womanly foreboding of disgrace' (MacDonald, 1867a: II, 290). While Anodos is offered sympathy as the victim of the seductive Alder Maiden, Catherine Weir is told that she has harmed George Everard by failing to resist him. Underscoring the damage she has caused, Mr. Walton tells Catherine that her seducer 'walks the earth the worse for you, defiled by your spoil, glorying in his poor victory over you, despising all women for your sake, unrepentant and proud, ruining others the easier that he has already ruined you' (MacDonald, 1867a: II, 291).

In *Alec Forbes of Howglen,* a conversation between Mr. and Mrs. Constable further demonstrates MacDonald's attempt to justify the unequal treatment of men and women in terms of sexual experience. Discussing Alec's rumoured behaviour, Mrs. Constable says, 'Women's just dreidfu'. Whan ance they gang the ill gait, they're neither to haud nor bin'' (MacDonald, 1865b: III, 96). She continues optimistically, 'Weel, he'll come oot o' their cluiks, maybe no that muckle the waur after a'' (MacDonald, 1865b: III, 96). However, her husband contradicts her: 'Richt or wrang aboot the women, I bude to ken mair aboot the men nor ye do; and I daur affirm and uphaud that never man cam' oot o' the grip o' thae poor deluded craters [...] without losin' a great pairt o' what was left in him o' the eemage o' God efter the fall' (MacDonald, 1865b: III, 97). While Mr. Constable is somewhat more lenient in his criticism of the women (they are 'poor deluded craters' rather than unredeemably 'dreadful' predators), he persists in upholding the man as a victim rather than a customer, and one likely to suffer permanent damage through the actions of his attackers.

MacDonald's narratives reveal a deep unease about the socially damaging effects of so-called 'unwomanly women'. Epstein Nord notes the that the Contagious Diseases Acts 'gave weight

to the powerful notion that such women existed to ensnare men and to defile their bodies with disease' (Epstein Nord, 1995: 9), while Mr. Walton's words in *Annals of a Quiet Neighbourhood* deepen the perceived wrong by claiming that sexual activity outside marriage is the result of a woman acting against her own nature – being possessed of a 'more delicate sense of purity' than a similarly 'fallen' man. Labelling Catherine as morally responsible for both her own seduction, and for the seduction of all of Everard's potential 'victims', MacDonald implicitly justifies the unequal treatment of men and women in both the social and legal regulation of sexuality. While the Contagious Diseases Acts used medico-legal discourse to justify targeting women alone in their campaign to stop the spread of venereal disease, MacDonald adds the moral concern that a woman's betrayal of her own 'innate purity' causes her seducer to doubt its existence, and therefore to threaten other women.

MacDonald's comments clearly align him with the supporters of the Contagious Diseases Acts, despite the vehement opposition of his friends Josephine Butler and Russell Gurney. His effective exoneration of Anodos (and contradictory vilification of Catherine Weir) is particularly striking in that Catherine Weir never becomes an active seducer. In contrast, when Anodos meets a young girl in the wood he immediately tries to take possession of her 'crystal globe'. What begins as an attempted seduction, with Anodos gently touching the globe, culminates in an apparent rape (Pionke, 2011: 28; McGillis, 1990: 43). Under the influence of his shadow doppelganger, Anodos takes hold of the globe 'in spite of her prayers, and, at last, her tears' and causes it to break (MacDonald, 1858: 106). In a similar (if less violent) situation, when Anodos discovers the body of his idealised Marble Lady trapped in an invisible statue, he enacts another seduction narrative in the role of Pygmalion. By graphically singing about each part of her body, he exposes that part of the statue, rendering her visible, tangible – and consequently less ideal. Ignoring the warning sign that says, 'Touch Not!', Anodos (like Pygmalion) loses control and touches her, wrenching her body from a transcendental form to a tangible reality. With that moment of contact, the statue becomes motile, and cries 'you should have sung to me; you should have sung to me!' (MacDonald, 1858: 205). Distraught over the loss of her sculpted idealism, she runs away from him crying.

Anodos's mistake comes after repeated warnings about the relationship between corporeality and sexuality – not merely through the contrast of the Beech Tree and Alder Maiden, but also through the physical characteristics of men and women in fairy land. Unlike the men, fairy-women have no arms – these being replaced by beautiful wings 'wherein they can shroud themselves from head to foot in a panoply of glistering glory' (MacDonald, 1858: 138). Indeed, when Anodos comments that Earth women have arms instead of wings, they are shocked, and exclaim 'how bold and masculine they must look; not knowing that their wings [...] are but undeveloped arms' (MacDonald, 1858: 142). As with the Beech Tree's 'undeveloped arms', MacDonald's replacement of arms with angelic wings uses the medium of fantasy to describe the relationship between physical restriction and spiritual growth. Just as Annie Anderson's physical and social passivity inhibits her ability to influence the world around her, so does the loss of a woman's arms articulate a symbolic incorporeality that metaphorically prevents her from reaching out to the material world. This incorporeality is explicitly linked to sexual purity by an apparently biological aspect of the angelic nature. Fairy-lovers die rather than touch, while reproduction is completely separated from physical interaction – children being found, rather than being born. In this world, Anodos's account of mortal concepts such as sex and childbirth offends most of the fairy-women, who immediately shroud their bodies in grey wings (MacDonald, 1858: 141). However, two rose-winged women instead choose to die, and Anodos states a belief that they were thereby reborn as mortal women – giving up spiritual incorporeality for the sake of mortal physical (and sexual) contact. In this way, life itself becomes an expression of non-idealised contact with the material world. They 'die into life', and thereby lose their idealised nature.

In *The Golden Key* Wolff describes the fairy-wood as a 'mournful place' where 'love between the sexes leads to death' (Wolff, 1961: 75), once again emphasising the correlation between sexuality and death (or corporeality) that begins with the coffin-bodied Alder Maiden in *Phantastes*, and ends with the vampyric Lilith in 1895. Indeed, the image of the beautiful corpse haunts many of MacDonald's narratives, and masks a point of difference between the dying femme fatale and the idealised woman who passively accepts death as evidence of her faith. While wandering through the Seven Dials in *Robert Falconer*, the narrator describes the face of a living woman as being 'like that of a beautiful corpse', save that 'It's eyes were bright. There was gin in its brain' (MacDonald, 1868b: III, 115). In the

confusion of the urban environment, he laments that 'It was a night of ghosts' (MacDonald, 1868b: III, 115).

MacDonald's association of the corpse with an idealised femininity is striking, particularly in the novel *Malcolm*. On seeing Griselda Campbell's body for the first time, her son's Petrarch-like itemisation of her beauty details the way in which the physical changes of death enhance her femininity. Her 'finely modelled features of which the tightened skin showed all the delicacy' enforce an image of fragility, while repeated references to quiescence - her 'fixed evanescence', 'listening stillness' and 'look of entreaty, at once resigned and unyielding' – emphasise an unmoving, unchanging, utterly passive nature (MacDonald, 1875b: I, 111). Moreover, MacDonald's assessment of her physiognomy depicts a 'low white forehead,' 'large eyeballs upheaving closed lids' and 'a mouth of suffering', all of which appear to enhance her beauty as a corpse while revealing her feminine character (MacDonald, 1875b: I, 111). The 'low white forehead' in particular contrasts the high forehead possessed by MacDonald's masculine heroes. While the high forehead indicated well-developed mental faculties and sympathetic awareness, MacDonald's feminine characters possess the low foreheads commonly ascribed to servants and animals, asserting a natural mental (and physical) subservience to their high-foreheaded masculine counterparts. While at this point the reader suspects that Griselda had an illegitimate child (due to the midwife Barbara Catanach's secret decision to inspect Griselda's dead body), her immobile and beautiful corpse articulates her idealised feminine nature, and (along with her son's masculine and muscular physique) prepares the reader for the revelation that according to Scottish law, Griselda and the Marquis were married at Malcolm's conception.

In his use of female corpses, MacDonald smoothes unwomanly natures into spiritual femininity through a process of externalisation – translating social stigma into physical, rather than spiritual, marks. The physical fact of Griselda's motherhood and the scar on the face of Alec's cadaver provide previously hidden evidence of a destructive lifestyle that is restrained by the immobilisation of death. However, in *Lilith* MacDonald's use of a false corpse allows him to mark the body with a destructive nature, yet leave the living spirit uncleansed (and therefore dangerous). On discovering Lilith's inanimate body at the edge of the Evil Wood, Mr. Vane reacts with horror rather than awe, and his description of her body

is stripped of the rhetoric that makes Griselda Campbell's corpse feminine. Whereas Griselda's tightened skin shows 'all the delicacy' of her 'finely moulded features', Lilith's skin is described as 'a thin elastic leather,' while her 'drawn and hollow' features are dominated by 'beautiful yet terrible teeth, unseemingly disclosed by the retracted lips' (MacDonald, 1895: 131). Mr. Vane contrasts Lilith's body with those 'beautiful sleepers' lying in Mr. Raven's house, and realises that by refusing the 'lovely privilege' of lying beside them he has accepted the 'awful duty' of caring for Lilith (MacDonald, 1895: 133). Mr. Vane next follows a grotesque imitation of Mr. Raven's instruction to lie beside the dead and await the resurrection. Unable to decide whether Lilith is dead or alive, he sleeps beside her for several weeks feeding her grapes and (unknowingly) his own blood until she awakens as a shape-shifting vampire. Mr. Vane's re-animation of Lilith's body therefore reverses the effeminisation of death, imbuing her corpse with an unnatural mobility that opens with drinking Mr. Vane's blood, and closes with the murder of her own daughter. In a powerful vision of apocalypse, Lilith overturns the relationship between life and death through her exertion of independent power. Refusing to 'sleep' in death, she becomes a walking corpse-queen whose city of Bulika becomes the site of war between mothers and their lost children – the idealised 'Little Ones' who (like Diamond in *At the Back of the North Wind*) are locked in a perennial childhood, unable to grow emotionally or physically within Lilith's barren waste-land.

Lilith's inversion of the maternal nature through unnatural female power appears at first glance to be a striking comment on the danger of unregulated female independence and sexuality. As with the coffin-bodied Alder Maiden (who assumes the appearance of the Marble Lady in order to seduce Anodos), the vampire queen is given form by the 'souls' of the men she has enslaved, and is thereby able to rule Bulika according to her own anti-domestic principles. However, despite the power that she appears to possess, her body remains a potent symbol of male ownership and control, invoking the same relationship between society and the female body that we see in the prostitution scenes of *Phantastes* and *Alec Forbes of Howglen.* Acting in rebellion against the God / Father who gave her angelic form, we are told that Lilith chose instead to 'receive Firmness and form' from her male 'victims', adopting 'the likeness true of that idea to where his soul did cleave!' (MacDonald, 1895: 201). As a result, Lilith's body is yet a product of male desire, constructed through a man's will for possession. However, her resultant body is far from ideal: instead of gaining

life, she becomes 'a fainting, dead, yet live Despair' (MacDonald, 1895: 202). Awaking to find that her body is a corpse, Lilith realises that she has given up her 'rubies' (the flush of life in her face) and her 'sapphires' (the flash of her eyes) for the sake of gaining 'fouled hair' and 'one blue breath' (MacDonald, 1895: 202). Like Catherine Weir (who gave her seducer a body that was apparently not hers to give, thereby casting her 'pearl' before a swine (MacDonald, 1867a: II, 289), Lilith trades her riches for things that are without value, culminating in the exchange of opals for a peasant's smock to replace her 'rotting' 'shroud' (MacDonald, 1895: 203). When she awakens fully, Lilith is horrified by her actions. She is a walking corpse, whose 'eyes not even gave out a phantom-flash; My fingers sank in pulp through pulpy skin; My body lay death-weltered in a mash Of slimy horrors […]' and she laments, 'Oh, had I lived the bodiless alone And from defiling sense held safe my heart, Then had I scaped the canker and the smart, Scaped life-in-death, scaped misery's endless moan!' (MacDonald, 1895: 203; 204). The similarity to MacDonald's earlier narratives of prostitution is unmistakable. By fulfilling her wish to isolate her body from God, choosing instead to embrace an identity formed from male lust and powerful female sensuality, she becomes as much of a 'living death' as the coffin-bodied Alder Maiden, while the murder of her daughter (epitomising her policy of child-murder within the city of Bulika) firmly her destructive sexuality with an infertile urban environment.

Previously, I noted that the discourses surrounding the Contagious diseases Acts originated from the national dilemma of venereal disease within the military, and this is well represented by Anodos's martial description of the fallen Rusty Knight in *Phantastes*. However, while *Phantastes* is the first of MacDonald's novels to discernibly reference the theme of prostitution, the topic reappears many times in subsequent years, with the focus of the threat shifting from a military to an urban environment. Within narratives such as *David Elginbrod, Alec Forbes of Howglen, Robert Falconer, Sir Gibbie* and even *Lilith*, the prostitute becomes at once a symbol of rapid urbanisation and the failure of domestic morality.

In *Robert Falconer*, the narrator steps into the largely third-person narrative to debate the themes of poverty and prostitution with the protagonist. Walking through the notorious Seven Dials region of London, he encounters 'brutal-looking men' and 'a squalid-looking woman with a starveling baby', and points to the presence of 'gin-shops' and 'the railway director' as

reasons for the state of the area (MacDonald, 1868b: III, 183). However, while these more literal features of the urban environment are described as the direct cause, it is the prostitute that becomes an emblem for inner-city corruption. When a 'flaunting woman' passes by, the narrator finds it difficult to 'keep down an evil disgust that would have conquered my pity' at the sight of a 'gay dirty bonnet, turning round, reveal a painted face, from which shone little more than an animal intelligence, not brightened by the gin she had been drinking' (MacDonald, 1868b: III, 184). Her presence is accompanied by sounds of violence and murder, with the paired images of 'a skinned cat, possibly still alive' and 'a tress of dark hair, torn perhaps from some woman's head' (MacDonald, 1868b: III, 184). Despite noting the presence of men, the narrator places the 'flaunting woman' at the heart of this scene of urban decay, and laments that '*Home* to such regions, from gorgeous stage-scenery and dresses, from splendid, mirror-beladen casinos, from singing-halls, and places of private and prolonged revelry, trail the daughters of men at all hours from midnight till morning' (MacDonald, 1868b: III, 184). While I have previously described MacDonald's representation of the urban environment as an introduction to 'fairy land' – a process of cultural estrangement for the protagonist in the midst of discovering his own identity – within the next section I shall explore urbanisation as a catalyst for the breakdown of domestic roles and boundaries; a social instability that coheres around the image of the non-domestic or 'unwomanly' woman.

Domestic Violence and Patriarchal Control

In the passage above, the prostitute becomes a focus for working-class violence and disorder. In her presence, women are abused, animals tortured and men murdered while unmarried mothers comfort their children with gin. Even these unmarried mothers are, like Lilith, stripped of maternity; their babies are 'half-dead' and 'clay-coloured', resting on 'cold, cheerless bosoms' as their mothers feed them 'poison' (MacDonald, 1868b: III, 193). In a vivid blurring of gothic horror and tragedy, MacDonald writes that come morning these women 'vanish like the unlawfully risen corpses in the graves of cellars and garrets, in the charnel-vaults of pestiferously-crowded lodging-houses, in the prisons of police-stations', and he laments that 'the voice of the night-guardian commanding them to move on, is as the howling of a death-hound hunting them out of the air into their graves' (MacDonald, 1868b:

III, 194). Despite the more sympathetic tone, the relationship between 'unlawfully risen corpses', the Alder Maiden and Lilith is clear, once again imbuing the sexualised female body with an unnatural mobility. Moreover, MacDonald's acknowledgement of their untenable situation is blunted by his assertion that their actions present an ongoing threat, not just to their partners (or the wives of their partners), but also to the illegitimate children resulting from their actions.

When Shargar's unmarried mother is introduced to the narrative in *Robert Falconer*, it is through her absence rather than her presence. She abandons her son, leaving him without food or shelter and forcing him to seek the charity of neighbours – whose reluctance to help him is described as a result of the fact that 'Shargar's character, whether by imputation from his mother, or derived from his own actions, was none of the best' (MacDonald, 1868b: I, 25). Shargar's initially untrustworthy nature is therefore portrayed as a natural consequence of his being raised by 'a tramper, with occasional fits of localization' who 'made her living as she herself best knew, with occasional well-begrudged assistance from the parish' (MacDonald, 1868b: I, 78). Unacknowledged by his father, abandoned by his mother, and finding himself in the position of inheriting her state of both dishonesty and financial dependency, Shargar appears as an individualised example of the children inhabiting the Seven Dials, raised by violent men, prostitutes and the gin houses. Such children are described as 'nursery-plants already in training for the places these men and women now held, then to fill a pauper's grave, or perhaps a perpetual cell' (MacDonald, 1868b: III, 183). Indeed, Shargar is only able to escape such a fate through the persistent intervention of Falconer, and Falconer's notions of individualised reform.[181]

In *Alec Forbes of Howglen*, the antagonist Patrick Beauchamp is less fortunate. Although he is neither killed nor arrested, Beauchamp's actions precipitate the suicide of Kate Fraser together with the moral collapse of the novel's hero. However, we are swiftly informed that Beauchamp's destructive nature is a characteristic inherited from his mother, who (we are told) eloped with his father as an act of revenge against her own father. As a result she was disinherited, and spent many years 'brooding over her wrongs, despising and at length hating her husband' (MacDonald, 1865b: II, 43). Mrs. Beauchamp's bitterness derives from poverty,

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[181] See page 131.

which in turn is described as a consequence of paternal disobedience. When her husband reacts by conducting an affair, his actions are excused by the assertion that she drove him to the act. Mrs. Beauchamp responds with an act of outstanding boldness (considering the period), demanding both divorce and custody of the child. She coerces her husband by threatening to poison the child rather than relinquish custody, and proceeds to 'mould and model' her son 'after her own heart' (MacDonald, 1865b: II, 44).

In *Malcolm* the schoolmaster echoes the concerns of inherited immorality articulated in *Alec Forbes of Howglen* and *Robert Falconer*, yet removes considerations of class and situation to explicitly blame the non-maternal nature. Commenting on the cruelty (and alleged infidelity) of the rich Mrs. Stewart, he comments, 'It does seem strange [...] that some women should be allowed to be mothers that through them sons and daughters of God should come into the world – thief babies, say! human parasites, with no choice but feed on the social body!' (MacDonald, 1875b: III, 41). However, the image of Mrs. Stewart's son as a beggar is a false one, demonstrating that even when the subject is a woman belonging to the middle class, an extramarital sexual history and non-domestic nature leads to an association with urban poverty. While Mrs. Stewart does not abandon her son, he grows to fear her to the extent that the very word 'mother' is sufficient to trigger an emotional collapse.

Like Alec's rejection of the feminine ideal following his discovery of Kate Fraser's affair in *Alec Forbes of Howglen*, Mr. Stewart's rejection of mothers is founded on his experience of a woman who fails to embody the traits of either maternity or femininity. This fear of his mother is rendered pathological, being described as an aspect of the condition for which he is known as the 'Mad Laird'. Moreover, when Malcolm attempts to explain the Mad Laird's condition to Mrs. Stewart, both body and fear become associated with the question – never overtly asked – of his legitimacy. Malcolm explains that Mr. Stewart suffers pain through his pronounced kyphosis, to the extent that he believes himself 'the child o' sin and wrath, and that Sawtan has some special propriety in him' (MacDonald, 1875b: II, 200). While Malcolm attempts to assert that the Laird's fear is a consequence of his confusion and pain, the fear is later proved justified when Mrs. Stewart arranges for the kidnap of her son, imprisoning him in the hope of precipitating an early death. However, his suspected illegitimacy is the driving

force behind his fear, exacerbating a sense of social and spiritual disconnection that is epitomised by his catch-phrase 'I dinna ken whaur I cam frae!' (MacDonald, 1875b: I, 16).

In *The Hope of the Gospel* MacDonald goes further to create a parallel between legitimacy and religious faith, commenting that 'it is absolutely necessary' to a man's 'real being' that he should know the 'relations in which he stands to his Origin' (MacDonald, 1892: 117). With these words, MacDonald over-writes the social problem of illegitimacy with a religious discourse, suggesting that illegitimate children feel themselves unclaimed by both parent and God. Later, when Malcolm is faced with the realisation that he is adopted, he recalls the Mad Laird's words, and ponders his own origin: 'In merry mood, he would henceforth be the son of some mighty man, with a boundless future of sunshine opening before him; in sad mood, the son of some strolling gipsy or worse - his very origin better forgotten - a disgrace to the existence for his share in which he had hitherto been peacefully thankful' (MacDonald, 1875b: II, 288). Out of fear for his own possible illegitimacy, Malcolm contemplates severing his social connections, since 'sure enough he was but a beggar's brat! – How henceforth was he to look Lady Florimel in the face? […] Nevermore could he look one of his old companions in the face! They were all honourable men; he a base-born foundling!' (MacDonald, 1875b: II, 289). He continues, 'He would tell Mr. Graham of course; but what could Mr. Graham say to it? The fact remained. He must leave Portlossie' (MacDonald, 1875b: II, 289).

The extremity of Malcolm's reaction is astonishing, considering not only the unproven nature of the rumour, but also the existence of another rumour (again unfounded) that he is himself the father of an illegitimate child.[182] Moreover, his reaction to the suggestion that Mrs. Stewart might be his own mother once again invokes a physical reaction as 'For the first time in his life, Malcolm, young and strong as he was, felt sick' (MacDonald, 1875b: III, 37). Soon, he realises 'how far bodily condition can reach in the oppression and overclouding of

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[182] Following Lizzy Findlay's seduction by Lord Miekelham she discovers herself to be pregnant. Lizzy's friendship with Malcolm results in a persistent rumour (initially believed even by Lizzy's own mother) that Malcolm is the father – a situation which results in the tarnishing of Malcolm's reputation within the township, and the breakdown of his relationship with the factor Mr. Crathie. Much of the subsequent 'clearance' narrative is portrayed as the result of Mr. Crathie's unwillingness to listen to Malcolm, due to his own fondness for Lizzy Findlay.

the spiritual atmosphere', and considers, 'Gien I be like this [...] what maun the weather be like aneth yon hum o' the laird's!' (MacDonald, 1875b: II, 306).

In the case of both Shargar's mother and Mrs. Stewart, we see the inherent danger of a mother who refuses to uphold the maternal ideal, raising children doomed to follow in her moral footsteps. The corruption of Shargar's mother is fully expressed by the way in which she treats her daughter Nancy Kennedy, whose existence she has hidden from Shargar. While we are initially told that her 'worst fault was the way she treated her son, whom she starved apparently that she might continue able to beat him' (MacDonald, 1868b: I, 78), her daughter suffers a worse fate. Commenting that Shargar's sister will 'be worth siller by the time she's had a while at the schuil' (MacDonald, 1868b: III, 48), his mother sells her daughter to Widow Walker, described as 'one of the worst of her class' (MacDonald, 1868b: III, 89), with the suggestion that she will thereby become a prostitute. Fortunately, on her death-bed Shargar's mother reveals that her 'woman-heart was alive still', and she confesses her actions to Falconer (MacDonald, 1868b: III, 84). Like the cadaver in Alec's dissection lab, Shargar's mother becomes idealised through the process of illness and death, and we are told just prior to her death that 'she too was eternal' (MacDonald, 1868b: III, 85).

The eventual rescue of Shargar's sister is a minor part of the plot, yet of key importance for MacDonald's views on the moral reform of the fallen woman or the prostitute. He tracks down Widow Walker and pays her to surrender the girl, who he places in the care of his housekeeper. Far from treating her as an equal, or even as the sister of his closest friend, he instead trains her in the fulfilment of domestic duties. Her cure is pronounced complete when she begins to 'take a share in the house-work, and at length to wait upon him' (MacDonald, 1868b: III, 90). Falconer's method of reform is eventually taken over by the near-angelic Miss St John, a thinly disguised amalgamation of Octavia Hill and Josephine Butler who initially inspires the child Robert to love beauty, whether in music or character. When he meets her again as an adult, it is in the heart of London as she visits the poor and the sick in the guise of a Sister of Mercy. It is through her influence that Falconer begins to practice Octavia Hill's policy for urban reform, purchasing and renovating tenement houses in the hope of likewise renovating the tenants.[183] However, Miss St John herself does not take an

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[183] See Chapter 1: Rewriting Manliness – The Defender of the Homeland.

active part in the process. Instead, she (like Butler) opens her house to women and children who are (for whatever reason) social outcasts. In more than one instance, these women are adopted into her home as a reprieve from a life of prostitution, and she sets about encouraging their spiritual reform through domestication.

The rescue and rehabilitation of Nancy Kennedy shines a spot-light on both MacDonald's approach to prostitution, and his vision of social reform. In her cure through domestication, we see echoed the accepted treatment of prostitutes within locked hospitals and reformatories during the years of the Contagious Diseases Acts, which were finally repealed in 1886. Anna Barton notes that the function of such institutions was to provide ''familial' forms of regulation (i.e. domestic training, religious instruction, supervision and guidance) normally administered within the family home' (Barton, 2011: 89). This domestic environment was balanced by 'a similar order of experience as the workhouse' in which 'women were taught ordinary domestic duties, so that they might become needlewomen washer-women, and domestic servants' (Walkowitz and Walkowitz, 1973: 97).

While the hospitals were often criticised for being managed by men, many of the reformatories and safe-houses were run in a model of a domestic environment, overseen by women who assumed the role of mothers to their daughter 'Magdalenes' (Walkowitz and Walkowitz, 1973: 97). However, despite assuming the role of 'mothers', the actual status of motherhood was considered of less importance than the possession of a maternal nature. Laura Morgan Green describes the paradox of Butler's habit of assimilating single women and married women, quoting Butler's declaration that 'We are all mothers or foster-mothers … I have known many unmarried women in whom all the best characteristics are stronger than in some who are actually mothers' (Green, 2001: 20). Although many of the Christian Socialists did not agree with Butler's position on matters of sexuality or prostitution, they shared her belief in reform through domestication. In MacDonald's narratives, this is clearly demonstrated by his representation of the mother as a feminine domestic ideal negotiating the tensions of urban reform. In *The Vicar's Daughter*, she is represented by Miss Clare – an unmistakable portrait of Octavia Hill (Smith, 2013: 69).

An early follower of the Christian Socialist movement, Octavia Hill was a fervent campaigner for social reform – yet like many of those who called themselves 'Christian Socialists', Hill's vision of reform centred around the idealisation of 'the family as a solid unit in which each individual had his or her allotted place'.[184] Enacting this model on a grand scale through the creation of housing associations, Hill applied the principles of domesticity to bring the actions and behaviours of working-class families in line with those of their middle class sponsors. Her passionate advocacy of sanitary reform, inspired by her grandfather's work on the Sanitation Bill, saw her undertake the management of 15 tenement blocks (containing 2-3000 residents) between 1866 and 1874 (Darley, 2010: 140). The experiment began with the purchase of a collection of tenement blocks in Paradise Place (or 'Little Hell'), Hill's characteristically practical response to her own increasing anger over the lack of care offered to tenants by landlords. Over the years of Hill's housing reform campaigns, the business of managing tenancies began to be portrayed, less as a commercial (and therefore frequently masculine) business venture, and more as a matter of domestic organisation.

The image of Octavia Hill as the domesticating heart of her working-class collectives is repeated throughout her letters and biographies. As a child she managed a group of child toy-makers, yet in addition to overseeing the quality of the work she took it upon herself to resolve arguments between the children, to educate them, to organise recreational activities, feed them, wash them and teach financial prudence (Darley, 2010: 37). In the 1866 article 'Cottage Property in London', she described the role of landlady as having more power over individuals than school-teachers did – 'power either of life or death, physical and spiritual' (Whelan, 1998: 45). Towards her tenants, she determined to exercise a beneficial moral and spiritual influence, either evicting or refusing accommodation to individuals or families 'leading "clearly immoral lives"' (Darley, 2010: 97).

As a middle class child, displaced from her home and raised within a violent estate on Tottenham Court Road, Miss Clare in *The Vicar's Daughter* (1872) appears as an inverted image of Nanny (*At the Back of the North Wind*).[185] While Nanny demonstrates that

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[184] 'Miranda recalled that Octavia carried copies [of the *Christian Socialist*] around and slept with one under her pillow' (Darley, 2010: 25; 39).
[185] See Chapter 1: Rewriting Manliness – The Defender of the Homeland.

displacement into a quasi middle class home can never eradicate her mercenary and 'common' nature, Miss Clare overlays her inner-city tenement block with a veneer of middle class respectability by exerting a moralising and domesticating influence over her impoverished neighbours. Styling herself as 'Granny' despite her youth, Miss Clare forges the tenants into an approximation of a family unit, with herself as matriarch. Her role is not merely to see to their welfare, but to preside over, instruct and morally rehabilitate the other residents. In this position, Miss Clare (like Octavia Hill) develops a relationship with her neighbours that embraces both the authority of teacher to students, and that of mother to children. As such, she is able to instil in her subordinates the qualities of middle class domesticity required for their progression towards moral adulthood, and to reinforce these values with juridical authority.

MacDonald's urban environment acts as a spotlight on the social consequences of a failed domestic structure, being rife with prostitution, crime, violence and alcohol. His cure, in common with many of the Christian Socialists, was individual reform within a rigorously policed domestic framework, whether enforced by a patriarch such as Robert Falconer, or a matriarch such as Miss Clare. The detrimental influence of those who fail in their domestic duties (such as Shargar's mother) is represented as a form of moral contagion, with the social and moral characteristics of the failed parent being transmitted to the next generation, fostering a breakdown in domestic boundaries as well as an apparent breakdown in self-sufficiency, with the children of such an environment being relegated to the status of 'thief babies' (MacDonald, 1875b: III, 41). However, the establishment of a domestic environment (such as that overseen by Miss Clare or Miss St John) is not always sufficient for full reform, and it is in these instances that we see the full extreme of MacDonald's portrayal of domestic regulation.

In narratives such as *At the Back of the North Wind, The Vicar's Daughter, Paul Faber, Surgeon* and *Donal Grant,* we see repeated examples of violence used against members of a domestic unit as a mechanism to enforce both patriarchal authority and ownership of the female body. Moreover, while in the novel *What's Mine's Mine* MacDonald firmly refutes the suggestion that he endorses domestic violence (MacDonald, 1886: I, 125), his narratives implicitly assert the culpability of the victim while offering sympathy to the perpetrator.

While on the one hand Anna Clarke and Lisa Surridge claim that 'marital violence threatened Victorian patriarchy because it disrupted the idea that men protected women in the home' (Surridge, 2005: 46), for MacDonald it appears instead as a necessary evil that allows men to confront 'unwomanly' behaviour and retain their belief in an idealised domestic femininity. Even heroic male figures (such as Malcolm) are frequently seen forcibly restraining rebellious mares in an effort to prevent them from harming themselves and others, with Malcolm claiming 'so long as my mare is not able to be a law to herself, I must be a law to her too' (MacDonald, 1878: 95). Like MacDonald's comments in *Donal Grant* and *What's Mine's Mine* (that the true man must be 'his sister's keeper' for the sake of 'national as well as individual growth' (MacDonald, 1883: I, 279; MacDonald, 1886: II, 56)), Malcolm's argument forces the reader to conclude that when an animal (or a woman) is 'unable to be a law unto herself', it is the civil and national duty of a man to 'be her keeper'. Even Lady Clementina (through whom MacDonald parodies the actions of female philanthropists who oppose all forms of suffering and punishment) is forced to conclude that Malcolm 'would serve his wife the same as his mare if he thought she required it! – And I have known women for whom it might be the best thing' (MacDonald, 1878: 197).[186] This thought is confirmed by Malcolm's assertion that 'I'm sure it's Kelpie's best chance o' salvation 'at I gang on wi' her' (MacDonald, 1878: 96). Through Lady Clementina's conflation of horse and wife, we are presented with the concept that physical subjugation – in the case of the mare, through the use of whips, spurs and fists – is necessary for forcing a rebellious individual to be 'a law unto herself', so that she might eventually have the 'best chance o' salvation'.

This 'acceptable' form of domestic violence is rarely explicit in MacDonald's novels, since it is perpetrated by heroic men whose manliness and domestic authority is unquestioned. However, a second form of domestic violence within MacDonald's works simultaneously articulates a popularly-held impression that the more reproachable forms of domestic violence were primarily a working-class problem – a point supported by Frances Power Cobbe's description of poor urban slum areas as the 'kicking districts' (Hamilton, 2001: 441). Within such narratives, the perpetrator is far from the enforcer of moral and spiritual authority, being instead an impoverished man driven to extremes of behaviour by the combination of his social situation and the non-idealised nature of his wife.

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[186] See page 131.

In both *The Vicar's Daughter* and *At the Back of the North Wind*, representations of domestic violence within working-class homes are implicitly blamed upon the injured woman – a fact supported by Sascha Auerbach's observation that working-class mothers were frequently portrayed as the root and cause of the moral decline of the working-class home, which school officials attributed specifically to 'the failures of working-class female domesticity' (Auerbach, 2010: 77). This association is clearly visible in MacDonald's narratives. In *The Vicar's Daughter,* the female narrator comments that 'to blame one's husband, even justly and openly, seems to me to border upon treachery itself' (MacDonald, 1872: III, 79). The comment is made shortly after Eliza (a working-class woman) approaches Miss Clare to complain that she has been beaten by her husband. As Miss Clare unravels the events leading up to the attack, Eliza is exposed as a vain and silly woman who provoked her impoverished and drunken husband by complaining that he had not bought her a silk dress. When Eliza criticises her husband for his drunken state, the narrator excuses it on the basis that the couple's child had died six months before – yet while the husband is shown to be grieving, no indication is offered of Eliza's sorrow. Indeed, throughout the exchange she is portrayed as manipulative. Working under the assumption that 'Miss Clare took her part' Eliza mournfully describes her life 'slaving from morning to night to make both ends meet, and goin' out every job I can get a-washin' or a-charin'' before expressing her fears that some night her husband will return so drunk from his social club that 'he's like to blow out my brains' (MacDonald, 1872: II, 246). When he swears at her, she 'spitefully' informs Miss Clare that she is 'used to sich', a charge which he angrily refutes (MacDonald, 1872: II, 247). Miss Clare's next action is to separate the couple for a few minutes. She takes the husband to her rooms for a cup of tea and a song, then when he falls asleep instructs Eliza to 'go down and get the place tidy, and a nice bit of supper for him' (MacDonald, 1872: II, 250). Following this instruction, Miss Clare proceeds to criticise Eliza's behaviour towards her husband, suggesting that he should have had a better reception after returning home only slightly drunk and with all of his wages. Eliza in turn admits that poverty has made her 'cross-grained', and contrasts this with her new feeling that 'I'd let him knock me about ever so, if only he wouldn't say as how it was nothing to him if I was dressed ever so fine' (MacDonald, 1872: II, 252).

From a position in which the actual injury was blamed on Eliza's temper, the conversation concludes with Eliza's temper being the reason not only for the injury, but also for her

willingness to complain about it. Equally disturbing is the way in which Miss Clare trivialises Eliza's predicament. She describes her as suffering from '*ennui*' like 'any fine lady in Mayfair' due to her need to stay confined in the house all day – this despite Eliza's earlier assertion that she takes washing and charing jobs – and prescribes a trip to the museum with her husband as a cure (MacDonald, 1872: II, 254). When the husband argues that he doesn't ask her to stay inside all day, Miss Clare contradicts him, saying 'she doesn't care to go without you. You wouldn't have her like one of those slatternly women you see standing at the corners, with their fists in their sides and their elbows sticking out, ready to talk to anybody that comes in the way' (MacDonald, 1872: II, 255). In this sentence, Miss Clare acknowledges that for a married woman the domestic sphere held the potential to become a social prison, reinforced by peer-to-peer (and middle class to working-class) chastisement. To prevent Eliza being seen as 'slatternly' her employment status is disregarded, her movement is restricted, and conversation with strangers is (apparently) prohibited.

A similar situation is presented in *At the Back of the North Wind,* when a drunken cabman attacks his wife. Diamond, the young protagonist, appears in the room 'as if he had been an angel with a flaming sword, going out to fight the devil' (MacDonald, 1871b: 179). Through martial imagery, MacDonald sets the scene of a social evil that a true man must fight, and this is emphasised when Diamond appraises the situation 'Like a wise soldier' and attacks the 'weakest point – that was the baby' (MacDonald, 1871b: 179). When Diamond enters the room, he is faced with the drunken cabman sitting hopelessly in his chair, his wife sobbing on the bed, and the crying and neglected baby in the crib. MacDonald comments that some people would foolishly 'make his wife angry by saying that it must be her fault as well as his' (MacDonald, 1871b: 179), yet many of Diamond's subsequent actions involve an indirect criticism of the wife. As he comforts the baby, Diamond describes a litany of excuses for the husband's behaviour, saying 'Poor daddy [...] Baby's daddy would never hit baby's mammy if he didn't take too much beer. He's very fond of baby's mammy, and works from morning to night to get her breakfast and dinner and supper, only at night he forgets, and pays the money away for beer' (MacDonald, 1871b: 181). Culpability is removed from the husband and placed on 'beer and nasty gin with turpentine in it' so that Diamond asserts that without alcohol 'mammy will be so happy, and look so pretty! And daddy will be so good to baby!' (MacDonald, 1871b: 182). The reader is encouraged in a feeling of sympathy for the plight of the cabman, whose will is co-opted by the lure of public houses. Meanwhile, however, the

staging of the scene catalogues the dilapidated state of the family's home, highlighting the failure of the wife to establish a warm domestic environment. The walls are described as 'dreary, and dirty, and empty, and hopeless' while the baby is left untended and crying (MacDonald, 1871b: 179). Moreover, we are told that 'the glass of the lamp was dirty, and the gas was bad' (MacDonald, 1871b: 179) indirectly referencing the parable of the ten virgins and the lamps (Matthew 25:1-13). In the parable, the virgins are warned to keep their lamps clean and filled in preparation for the coming of the Bridegroom, yet when five fail to do so they are excluded from the marriage. The parable concludes with the warning, 'Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.' The dirtiness of the lamp therefore implicitly suggests that the wife has failed in her domestic duty; she was unprepared when her husband arrived home, and suffers the consequences of her failure. In both *The Vicar's Daughter* and *At the Back of the North Wind*, domestic violence is therefore described as the result of the wife's failure to provide an appropriate domestic environment for her husband. Moreover, Miss Clare rebukes Eliza for failing to create a warm welcome for her husband, suggesting that through the failure of domesticity husbands are driven from the domestic sphere into the public houses. The social ill of alcoholism is therefore portrayed as being in part due to a failure in the woman's ability to fulfil her role as wife.

While in *What's Mine's Mine* (1886) MacDonald defensively refutes the suggestion that he approves of domestic violence, he asserts that 'it is a worse and more yet more shameful thing for a man to break his wife's heart by systematic neglect, than to strike her and be sorry for it' (MacDonald, 1886: I, 125). Moreover, in *Paul Faber, Surgeon* he argues that the man who is reduced to striking (even murdering) his wife is to be pitied, since 'friendly, lovely death, the midwife of heaven, comes to their [the victim's] relief, and their pain sinks in precious peace. But what is to be done for our brother's soul, bespattered with the gore of innocence?' (MacDonald, 1879b: I, 104). It is a close echo of the values espoused in MacDonald's narratives on sexuality, in which the seducer is portrayed as a greater victim than the seduced, demonstrating the frequency with which the boundary between sexuality and violence was blurred. In *What's Mine's Mine*, we see a further example when a breakdown in the relationship between father and daughter culminates in a physical attack. Witnessing her husband moving to strike his daughter, Mrs. Palmer attempts to restrain him 'as if rather to protect him from the deed than her daughter from its hurt' (MacDonald, 1886:

III, 175). Moreover, the daughter (Mercy Palmer) feels guilt over pushing her father to such an extreme, and expresses her concern that this behaviour will make her 'unworthy' of being Alistair Macruadh's wife. In an attempt to prove herself, she explains that she has not eaten anything nice since angering her father. Her sacrifice is paralleled to the actions of Portia in *The Merchant of Venice*, who wounds herself 'that she might prove to her husband she was able to keep a secret' (MacDonald, 1886: III, 189).

In these narratives, MacDonald repeatedly rewrites contemporary discourses on domestic violence to focus on the aggressor as victim. This point is emphasised in *The Vicar's Daughter* when the narrator criticises a woman who complains of her illness. She asks, 'why did He make the Captain of our salvation perfect through suffering? Was it not that he might in like manner bring many sons into glory? Then, if you are enduring, you are working with God' (MacDonald, 1872: III, 230). Drawing a parallel between the crucifixion and a woman's ability to passively accept pain, MacDonald suggests that female affliction may precipitate the salvation of 'many sons'. In *Donal Grant* (1883), this association is brought to its most extreme conclusion when a woman is praised for her loyalty in forgiving the man who tortures, and later murders her. Despite being chained to a bed and sealed within a secret chapel by her would-be husband, and despite being left to die while the body of her child decomposes on the altar, Lord Morven's lover not only assumes responsibility for her own treatment, but suffers great pain in order to write a letter exonerating him. Moreover, she apologises for allowing her hand (severely abraded by the manacle he has forced on her wrist) to drip blood over the paper, fearing that 'you will think I have done it to let you see how it bleeds' (MacDonald, 1883: III, 108). She goes on to suggest that she will be denied entry to heaven for the crime of pre-marital sex, and concludes that the worst aspect of her damnation would be that 'I shall never see you again – for to be where I could see you would never be punishment enough for my sins' (MacDonald, 1883: III, 108). Later, when the dying Lord Morven is reminded of her words, he believes himself redeemed by her forgiveness, and in turn repents. Sadly, he asserts, 'She was my wife, and deserved to be my wife; and if I had her now, I would marry her' (MacDonald, 1883: III, 262). From a narrative of torture, imprisonment and murder, MacDonald's Blue Beard finds salvation as a result of an abused woman's willingness to suffer for the sake of her husband's soul, while the woman, idealised by her passive suffering, is transformed from illicit lover to true wife.

Far from expressing anger at the legal difficulties facing women who were being abused in their homes, in MacDonald's narratives domestic violence and compulsion become tools to enforce the performance of a woman's domestic role. Masculine men treat violence and compulsion as a husbandly right and duty, physically enforcing a domestic ethic when the woman appears unwilling to do so. Working-class men abuse their wives as a result of domestic neglect, and therefore equally uphold the domestic mode. In this way, male ownership over the female body becomes translated into the enforcement of an ideological 'prison', whereby men are supported in the need to physically restrain and punish women who seek to rebel against their domestic identities. While not presented as a treatment, violent episodes are nevertheless curative – and therefore positively reinforced.

In *Paul Faber, Surgeon*, the social relationship between husband and wife is explored in greater detail, and demonstrates that in MacDonald's narratives, husbandly control is not limited to his wife's current thoughts and actions, but also those of her past. When Juliet accepts Paul Faber's proposal, she immediately cedes her current life to her husband's needs. She gives up her search for work as a governess in order to become a house-wife, and supports him professionally by returning 'the calls made upon her, at the proper retaliatory intervals' (MacDonald, 1879b: II, 146). However, she does not immediately cede him retrospective authority, and makes herself ill with wondering, 'Was marriage a slavery of the very soul, in which a wife was bound to confess everything to her husband, even to her most secret thoughts and feelings? Or was a husband lord not only over the present and future of his wife, but over her past also?' (MacDonald, 1879b: II, 221). The question parodies Frances Power Cobbe's 1878 complaint that the legal relationship between husband and wife 'is very little better than one of master and slave' (Hamilton, 2001: 441).

Despite the position of the law, which argued that 'no man had anything to do with his wife's ante-nuptial history,' Juliet is horrified to think that 'she did not belong to him so utterly that he must have a right to know *every* thing about her!' (MacDonald, 1879b: II, 223; 232). Still more disconcerting is the fact that, following the example of other, more idealised couples in MacDonald's narratives, the supremacy she cedes to her husband combines authority with the right of physical chastisement. Indeed, both Wolff and Wood draw attention to the number of 'whipping episodes' in MacDonald's narratives, which Wood attributes to MacDonald's

growing belief that 'more punishment was necessary to elicit the proper repentance', culminating in 'Masochistic and sadistic images' that reinforce the power-dynamic of the patriarchy (Wood, 1993: 112). When she describes the idealised Thomas Wingfold's 'reluctant' decision to whip his son, she notes the child's complicity in his own punishment. He begs to be beaten, then grovellingly apologises for the pain his father must have experienced by beating him. The child's abjection is reminiscent of Lord Morven's lover in *Donal Grant,* apologising for revealing the wounds that he has inflicted. MacDonald's idealisation of such remorseful women (and children) stands in sharp contrast to the arguments of Cobbe, who described 'the readiness of abused women to defend their abusers' as evidence of how far the iron of their fetters has eaten into their souls' (Hamilton, 2001: 442). Wood likewise argues that such narratives reveal 'a deep ambivalence about the apparent simultaneity of love and punishment', attempting to 'persuade the victim that peace and pleasure are only found in submission to arbitrary power and pain' (Wood, 1993: 117). This message is reinforced multiple times in *Paul Faber, Surgeon*, in which the spiritual and physical relationship between Thomas Wingfold and his wife Helen closely resembles that asserted between Wingfold and his son.

Supported by his position as curate (as well as by the angelic connotations of his surname), Thomas and Helen Wingfold embrace the assumption that the wife must depend on her husband for spiritual guidance, creating a naturalised moral supremacy that implicitly suggests that any disruption in the marital relationship (through violence or fear) must be due to the moral failure of the wife, resulting in the enforced assertion of patriarchal authority. Supporting this reading, Thomas Wingfold considers, 'what a hideous thing fear of her husband must be for a woman, who has to spend not her days only in his presence, but her nights by his side! I do wonder so many women dare to be married. They would need all to have clean consciences' (MacDonald, 1879b: II, 195). Helen replies, 'If ever I come to be afraid of you, it will be because I have done something very wrong indeed' (MacDonald, 1879b: II, 195). Their conviction regarding this point is emphasised when Helen considers that she has acted incorrectly. The narrator informs us that 'Once, when I was in her husband's study, she made a remark on something he had said or written, I forget what, for which her conscience of love immediately smote her. She threw herself on the floor, crept under the writing table at which he sat, and clasped his knees' (MacDonald, 1879b: I, 149).

Later, we see the same scene replayed between Paul and Juliet Faber, when Juliet confesses her sexual history to her husband. In grotesque mimicry of Helen's submission, Juliet 'hurriedly slipped her night-gown from her shoulders to her waist, and over her head, bent towards the floor, held up to him a riding-whip' (MacDonald, 1879b: II, 241). Paul's failure to redeem his wife by either taking the whip or forgiving her, is described as his failure of 'love and husband-power,' (MacDonald, 1879b: II, 255) confirming that the role of the husband is to act as moral guardian and judge over his wife's actions. Juliet's faith in her husband's spiritual authority is demonstrated when she pleads, 'you saved my life once: save my soul now. Whip me, and take me again' (MacDonald, 1879b: II, 243). As previously noted, despite the spirituality that MacDonald describes as an integral aspect of idealised femininity, the assumption of the husbandly role is portrayed as synonymous with the assumption of spiritual and moral authority.[187] By refusing the whip, Faber refuses to embrace his position as both judge and husband, and this is confirmed when the narrator writes 'I would have had him do *anything* rather than choose himself and reject his wife: make of it what you will. Had he struck her once […] he would have flung himself on the floor beside her […] and baptized her in the tears of remorse and repentance; from that moment they would have been married indeed' (MacDonald, 1879b: II, 246). Even the image of Paul 'baptizing' Juliet with his tears asserts his position as spiritual authority, and translates the whip into a tool of divine salvation. As such, Paul and Juliet's marriage rests, not only on Juliet's past actions, but on Paul's willingness to accept the husbandly duty of chastisement, by physically purifying his wife.

The assertion of husbandly authority in *Paul Faber, Surgeon* is re-enacted in *Lilith*, which utilises the themes of disguise and metamorphosis in a powerful example of domestic control exerted over a seemingly uncontrollable female body. While Jennifer Sattaur argues that 'Lilith is neither typical of the late-nineteenth century, nor typical of George MacDonald' (Sattaur, 2006: 25), it remains a distinctively *fin de siècle* narrative that once again uses themes of violence and mobility to restrain a destructive, non-domesticated female identity. When Lilith's refuses to submit to the will of husband and father, the resulting social destruction necessitates her 'imprisonment' within what Pennington describes as 'a Christian myth of redemption' (Pennington, 2002: 27) that has implicit parallels to imprisonment

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[187] See Chapter 6: Unmuscular Christianity – Obfuscating Femininity.

within a patriarchal domestic hierarchy, conformity to which is finally enforced by physical torture.

In *Lilith*, the need for physical control is exemplified by her shape-shifting abilities. Throughout the narrative, the various receptacles of Lilith's consciousness – a spotted leopardess, a Persian cat, a vampiric queen – are bound together through the presence of the 'mutilated' book that describes her history. However, the book itself is both a disguise and an object that can be controlled in the absence of Lilith's body, putting 'an end to her protean behaviour' (McGillis, 1990: 46). While it is the love of books that prompts Mr. Vane to enter the fantasy world, he swiftly learns that his love of books is misplaced – that they are in fact 'dead bodies [...] and a library nothing but a catacomb' (MacDonald, 1895: 37). Indeed, when he tries to catch a beautiful bird-butterfly within the fantasy world, it turns into 'a dead book with boards outspread [...] cold and heavy' (MacDonald, 1895: 63).

Appearing to be living creatures, at Vane's Pygmalion-like touch books become corpses – yet the mutilated volume is not itself a dead body, but rather an illusion of life. At the outset, we are told that the vellum (or skin) bound book was deliberately cut in half and glued above a row of severed book-spines, in an attempt to make the 'soulless, bodiless, non-existent books' appear more realistic as a full bookshelf (MacDonald, 1895: 18). In a similar way, Lilith imbues her soulless corpse with the appearance of life, the process of her reanimation taking the form of a poem within the 'mutilated book'. However, patriarchal control is emphatically asserted when her ex-husband Adam takes possession of the book and reads the poem aloud, leading Lilith (in cat-form) to utter an 'ugly cry of feline pain' (MacDonald, 1895: 202). When she tries to escape, he throws the book between her and her exit, forcing her to confront her true nature as an undomesticated, unnaturally mobile creature whose non-maternal nature has frustrated the cycle of death and birth in return for her status as queen over a sterile city. Adam explains to Mr. Vane, saying that she 'counted it slavery to be one with me, and bear children for Him who gave her being' (MacDonald, 1895: 204). Adam uses the traditional marriage vows to demonstrate Lilith's disobedience, saying that he would only 'love and honour, never obey and worship her' (MacDonald, 1895: 204), despite the imperative on her to obey him. We are told that as a result, she 'poured out her blood to escape me' (MacDonald, 1895: 204) – killing herself to escape a marriage that she viewed as

slavery. Appraising *Lilith* from the viewpoint of mythological tropes, Nina Auerbach describes Lilith as a 'malevolent divinity' whose power is diluted by 'contrasting associations of ruling women with the soothing anodynes of maternity, religion and death' (Auerbach, 1982: 38). As a woman who has given up her domesticity, Lilith finds that any power she has claimed for herself results decay rather than liberty. As such, Lilith's attempt to escape from her marital 'slavery' is fruitless, and Adam exerts control over her as 'her master now whom she would not have for her husband!' (MacDonald, 1895: 205). When she threatens to 'drink the blood' of their child (Lona), he compels her body: 'Down!' he cried; 'or by the power given me I will melt thy very bones' (MacDonald, 1895: 207). As a result of his outburst she sinks to the floor and transforms into a grey cat, whom Adam picks up and locks within the book-closet. However, despite Lilith's threat to kill Lona, Adam predicts that she shall one day be unmade through the actions of her own daughter, 'for even Lilith shall be saved by her childbearing' (MacDonald, 1895: 205).

True to Adam's prophecy, at the moment when Lilith murders her daughter, she loses her power, becoming 'withered and wasted' (MacDonald, 1895: 257). Appearing once again as a corpse – this time with 'her eyes alone alive, wickedly flaming' (MacDonald, 1895: 257) – she is brought to her ex-husband's house where, in a final attempt to redeem her, 'Adam cuts off her defiant hand,' disfiguring her body in order to make her spiritually clean (Pennington, 2002: 28). Here, we see a clear example of the unfeminine body being punished and mutilated, in order to precipitate a woman's (and a society's) salvation through the reassumption of patriarchal domesticity. Through the removal of Lilith's hand, we reach a point of closure in the narrative: her insubordinate body is symbolically restrained, precipitating a return to submission within a patriarchally-ordered hierarchy. McGillis argues that *Lilith* attempts to 'reassert the authority of masculine control', suggesting that such control is undermined by Anodos's psychosexual explorations in *Lilith*'s precursor *Phantastes* (McGillis, 1990: 47). However, he asserts that such an attempt fails because Lilith 'does not accept patriarchal authority easily, and the book manages to escape masculine control' (McGillis, 1990: 47). McGillis points to the dynamic and fluid nature of *Lilith*, both as a woman and as a narrative, as evidence of this frustration of patriarchy, yet MacDonald's treatment of sexualised or non-domestic women in each book acts as testament to the final victory of male control over the female body. The idealised women remain static, their maternal natures uncorrupted by any hint of either sexual contact or physical motherhood,

their femininity confirmed by a willingness to passively suffer for the sake of their 'children'. Eve, Mara, Lona and the Beech Tree draw the protagonist towards his 'home', an environment characterised by maternal love and protection. In contrast, the Alder Trees and vampires seek sexual gratification from their 'victims' as a means to securing their own identities, and in doing so perpetuate a social contagion that threatens the domestic environment that their counterparts try to secure.

In *Lilith,* MacDonald describes the ultimate danger of rebellion. Prior to her capture, Lilith is unrestrained and unrestrainable, a shape-shifter embodying the predatory qualities of the post-Darwinian natural world together with the self-destructive, and socially-destructive, anger of a woman imprisoned within social bonds that she refuses accept. Her pacification at the hands of her ex-husband therefore represents the final victory for patriarchy, with Lilith returned to willing submission within Adam's home, her daughter at her side, watched over by her idealised counterpart Eve.

Conclusion: Fatherly Power, Domesticity and the National Health

The qualification of manliness in MacDonald's era was a matter of extensive debate, forming a tension between the newly-visible 'masculinities' arising out of social change (in areas such as suffrage, employment, living conditions and education), and the rhetoric that positioned a singular 'manliness' as the power-base of the mid-Victorian era. Within the works of George MacDonald, as with his more well-known contemporaries Charles Kingsley, John Ruskin and F.D. Maurice, the need to define a unified 'manly identity' was provoked by an environment of intense technological and societal change, precipitating a cultural need to re-align social, political, physical and economic power within a framework of male moral strength. Taking his lead from Thomas Carlyle and German transcendentalism, MacDonald promoted a paternalist 'ideal' of manliness that articulated a synthesis of moral and physical power, yet which also served to promote a paradigm of domestic authority within diverse areas of male interaction. The dual purposes of this ideal were the defence of national identity (the purview of what I term the 'Soldier body'), and the enforcement of a moral authority hierarchy (the role of the 'Father') that is swiftly subsumed within a hierarchy of social and domestic status. Under the influence of the unificatory principles of Christian Socialism (and its fight against 'schism'), the discourses of manliness, morality and social status become inseparable, giving rise to narratives of individual moral development that culminate in patriarchal power for the few, and social obedience for the many.

This thesis explores the social pressures underpinning MacDonald's representation of manliness – whether on the battlefield, in the workplace, in the home or in the city – demonstrating the way in which his idealised combination of the Soldier body and the Father acts as a line of defence against 'disruptive' social values. However, this very pacification – this promotion of social cohesion – relies upon the adoption of an identity that was palpably unrealistic for many members of society, and it is in the experiences of MacDonald's non-idealised characters that we begin to witness the fissures within his template for social (and individual) reform.

One of the core principles of Foucauldian thought is the role of power in the construction of individual identity – a self-categorisation that seems inevitable, if only because it is culturally

pervasive (Simons, 1995: 1). Contrary to the Marxist supposition that power operates in a purely hierarchical fashion (imposed from above), Foucault represents power as a network, reinforced on all sides by mutually re-affirmative discourses.[188] Moreover, he asserts that 'the manifest discourse [...] is really no more than the repressive presence of what it does not say' (Foucault, 2002: 28), encouraging us to look beyond the text to the 'incorporeal discourse' revealed by its absence (Foucault, 2002: 27; Foucault, 1978: 27). While MacDonald's construction of manly identity appears at first sight universally attainable (whether by the shoemaker Hector Macallaster or the doctor's son William Macmichael in *Gutta Percha Willie*), the naturalised subservience of MacDonald's working-class heroes separates them from the social power enjoyed by their more well-born, more wealthy or more educated counterparts, demonstrating that while 'manliness' appeared to present a concept of empowered male selfhood to all sections of society, it remained the purview of those already in possession of social and political (or patriarchal) power.

It is only through examination of these fissures that MacDonald's rhetoric of manly identity can be fully observed – fissures that reveal the presence of marginalised characters who, incompatible with the template of idealised manliness, or with the domestic ideology he represents, are left without identity. Within MacDonald's narratives, figures such as the urban inhabitants of *Alec Forbes of Howglen* haunt the margins of his texts, frequently characterised by gothic imagery that emphasises the discomforting impact of their presence. They represent the social figures and situations that are never fully resolved, yet which are instead smoothed (or forced) into conformity. John Beynon reminds us that masculinity is 'always interpolated by cultural, historical and geographical location', and as such is a 'diverse, mobile, even unstable, construction' (Beynon, 2001: 1, 2), however, in the face of changing cultural demands MacDonald's construction of manliness remains unnaturally rigid, resolving tensions by drawing diverse areas of conflict back into a parochial golden-age of patriarchal power.

Throughout MacDonald's narratives, threats to paternalism are pacified. Disruptive fathers (such as the foolish Colonel Cathcart in *Adela Cathcart,* the profligate Marquis in *Malcolm*, or the mercenary Mr. Palmer in *What's Mine's Mine*) are neutralised and removed from

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[188] Foucault credits Nietzsche as the first to consider 'the power relation as the general focus [...] of philosophical discourse' (Sheridan, 2005 [1980]: 114).

positions of power, restoring order by allowing their subordinates (such as the rebelling inhabitants of Port Lossie in *Malcolm*, or Mr. Palmer's daughters in *What's Mine's Mine*) to fall back into the role of patriarchal obedience. Insidious national enemies (such as the Bohemians Baron von Funkelstein and Lord Meikleham) are stripped of their power and defeated. Mercenary shop-workers caught cheating their customers, or ministers and doctors who work only to secure their 'fee' are revealed for the duplicitous caricatures of manliness that they are, appearing to be gentlemen even as they violate the precepts of manly behaviour defined in antagonism to economic realities. Within the urban environment, the action is still more marked. Mirroring the actions of the Working Men's Colleges, potential Chartists are *educated* into peaceful acceptance of their position, learning to view their role as part of the 'economy o' natur' (MacDonald, 1875b: II, 10). Angelic fish learn to fly into pots of boiling water, allowing themselves to be eaten so that they may achieve their *divine end* by serving one *higher than themselves* (MacDonald, 1867b: 266). Still more disturbing are the methods of corporal violence used against the women (and occasionally children) who violate the sanctity of the domestic environment.

Greville MacDonald emphasises this point, admitting that he often looked upon his father 'with some fear', since MacDonald's belief in 'passive obedience' would sometimes result in 'severe' corporal punishment (Wood, 1993: 113). It is curious that such corporal punishment is rarely directed against MacDonald's male characters. At worst, MacDonald's heroes fight with their antagonists, as in the confrontation between Hugh Sutherland and Funkelstein in *David Elginbrod*, or between Alec Forbes and Beauchamp in *Alec Forbes of Howglen*. The immoral *victims* of these attacks may be injured, may lie abed for days, may be forced to leave the narrative – yet the violence inflicted pales in comparison to that levelled against the women who refuse to passively obey the strictures of their domestic position. The dog Juno (who is associated with the image of an unmaternal mother) is beaten in an almost gleeful manner, a shocking spectacle of graphic torture that is yet portrayed as a just (and humorous) consequence of biting the child Annie Anderson. Likewise, Lilith's refusal to passively accept the authority of father and husband results in her imprisonment together with the loss of her hand, removing the symbol of social interaction and material power. The model leaves us to wonder whether, had Tibbie Dyster refused to lie down beneath the flood waters in *Alec Forbes of Howglen*, she (like Maggie Tulliver in George Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss*) would have been forcefully and violently drowned.

It is in this context that Malcolm's need to 'be a law' over his horse so long as she is 'not able to be a law to herself' is revealing (MacDonald, 1878: 95). In his place as master over the mare Kelpie, his right to express his authority in a physical manner is justified by the danger she represents to those around her. He repeatedly warns people to back away, knowing that they might be injured through proximity with the volatile creature. When Lady Clementina asks him to allow her groom to try to calm the horse, he responds that to let another man touch her 'would be murder', and so proceeds to beat Kelpie into submission (MacDonald, 1878: 96). Clementina's later association of this act with Malcolm's willingness to beat a wife is upheld by MacDonald's repeated assertions that wife-beating is better than husbandly neglect (MacDonald, 1886: I, 125), but it leaves MacDonald's definition of *husbandly neglect* open to interpretation. While in texts such as *Paul Faber, Surgeon* he describes it as a husband's willingness to ridicule or disregard his wife, Malcolm's actions make it clear that it is also a refusal to enforce the correct behaviours, and the correct level of obedience, to her *master*.

MacDonald's narratives are riddled with the consequences of such disobedience. Mistress Partan's disbelief in the authority of husbands in *Malcolm* is held up against her daughter Lizzy's premarital pregnancy; Mrs. Stewart's suspected infidelity in the same novel is paralleled with her hatred of (and desire to imprison and murder) her son, the defenceless Mad Laird. Patrick Beauchamp's disrespect towards cadavers and his seduction of Kate Fraser (which leads to her suicide) is linked to the destructive attitudes of a mother who rebelled against her father before divorcing her husband for an instance of adultery that is implicitly described as *her fault* (MacDonald, 1865b: II, 44).

It is these disconcerting images that rationalise MacDonald's unequal treatment of the men and women who refuse to uphold the domestic structure. The sexual double-standard, like the Contagious Diseases Acts, was predicated on a concept of natural femininity – an *a priori* state of domesticity required for the security and perpetuation of the home and the home-land. Synonymised with the health and soul of the nation, the domestic environment was sacrosanct, guarded over by an *angel* who is protected from the influences of the outside world. Ruskin asserts that any incursion into that world – any trace of pollution – must

therefore only arise 'because she herself has sought it' (Ruskin, 1871: 91). It is the actions of the woman – not those of the man – which therefore pose the most potent risk to the domestic environment. Chartist rebellions are controlled through a peaceful education in the duties of citizenship, but it is the rapid and violent shifts in legislation regarding women that threatens domesticity. Progressive female education is therefore shown to induce *worldliness* or *fastness*. Property ownership is associated with a desire to 'make my castle my husband' (MacDonald, 1883: II, 173). Legislation against domestic violence is supported in the abstract, but shown to have unfortunate consequences in instances where 'it might be the best thing' (MacDonald, 1878: 197). Within such narratives, we see mechanisms of violence and control brought to bear on female bodies that defy conformity to a domestic identity. Like the struggling animals in *A Rough Shaking*, who injure themselves and others in their attempts to be free, these women exist in a self- and socially- destructive state of rebellion which is brought under control by the actions of the heroic man. In each case, these women are returned to the bounds of domestic containment – violently, pitilessly – yet in the end, willingly.

It is this final act of quiescence in each case – this final smoothing over of the fissures in society – that is the most disturbing aspect of such narratives. I conclude my case with the example of Lilith – a once powerful female ruler who defied domestic control at the hands of her father, her husband, and also at the hands of her child. However, in the course of the story, she is beaten, the various receptacles of her body passed from man to man as she struggles to maintain control over her own identity. Possessed, imprisoned and mutilated, she finally succumbs to her fate, and willingly lies down to sleep in the house of her ex-husband, in the embrace of a child, under the watchful eye of her husband's new wife, until such time as her father bids her to awaken. In an almost Orwellian manner, even Lilith's ability, willingness and knowledge of resistance is removed, and she finds herself content in the bounds of an identity that she had once so passionately rejected.

In *A Man's Place*, Tosh notes the importance placed upon a man's ability to fulfil his role as head of the Victorian household. He describes how 'political thinkers held that the authority relations of the household were a microcosm of the state' claiming that 'disorder in one boded ill for the stability of the other' (Tosh, 1995: 3). Failure to enforce domestic authority

over women results in the perpetuation of the social threat, as 'thief babies' rise out of the urban slums (MacDonald, 1875b: III, 41), or as men under the influence of a destructive maternal education inflict their social views on the vulnerable members of society. It is therefore in the name of the Father that we see order imposed over disruptions in MacDonald's path to social resolution. It is likewise through the controlling hand of the Father that the power-structures of domesticity are maintained across all inhabitants of the social fabric, however unwilling they are, or however unsuited they might be, to confinement within its borders.

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